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THE FILMS OF  
PERSONALITY  
SECOND SERIES

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REGINALD C. ROBBINS



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For Professor Tussig  
from  
Reginald C. Robbins

March 2, 1911





**P. W. TAUSIG,  
CAMBRIDGE,  
MASS.**

POEMS  
OF  
PERSONALITY

SECOND SERIES

REGINALD C. ROBBINS



— “*to speak beyond the book*”

CAMBRIDGE  
Printed at The Riverside Press  
1910

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# **POEMS OF PERSONALITY**

**SECOND SERIES**



## CONFUCIUS

ALACK ! down from the Golden Years of Kings  
Perfect in every enterprise of life  
And Sages calm in benison of Shang-te,  
Unto the turmoil of these latter days,  
This modern-made forgetfulness of earth,  
What lapse, degeneration ! And the fall  
Continues with the passing of the days ;  
And Princes lift the sword against their kind,  
And none are Kings. And no superior man  
Is counsellor ; nor folk obedient  
Anywhere bear in mind the Rule of Shun,  
Nor guide their ways by the Proprieties,  
Nor sacrifice by ceremonial  
Exact, nor regulate by music-mood  
Nor holy ode, conduct and character.  
But all, both high and low, demand new modes  
Of turmoil, new disorder ; whilst this sun  
Rises and sets, and stars upon their course  
Move nightly, marking our disease and death.  
I have made study of the Golden Years,  
Their lore of order and their ways of worth  
Perfect, plain-fashion'd ; whence am well aware •

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

How, might but men return unto those laws  
Of firm obedience in both home and State,  
Of wise command, submission questionless,  
By king or husband, subject, yea, or wife,  
Then might the rebel or the concubine  
Garrulous, lustful, be unknown among us ;  
And government be peaceful, taxes just,  
And many sons be born to reverence  
Both parents equally. Hence would I teach  
This Middle Kingdom, centre of the skies,  
With sure authority the method of them  
Celestial, absolute ; that so might men  
Re-live the ancient dignity of life,  
And stand re-born as on the pristine earth  
And be of Golden Years, or slaves or kings.  
I am so fain to teach, yet nowhere find  
Right opportunity ; but fear my faith  
Will fade unheard when death o'ertaketh me  
(My creed, of destiny too like mine own !)  
And none after myself be bless'd to know —  
For what disciple can preserve a truth  
Without example in my private life  
Which some successful government alone  
Under my counsel could afford to him ? —

## CONFUCIUS

None bless'd to know the truth establish'd by  
The fair performance of the Golden Kings.

'Sooth, in these days of turbid insolence  
When nought is order'd in authority,  
But hearts are bruised and broken with despair  
Of learning each some novelty to suit  
The strain and stress of untoward circumstance,  
Stands this my novelty and my despair  
That nowhere men may heed the precept wise,  
The proof irrefutable which I tell them  
Glean'd of the wisdom of the greater age  
Before all things grew old and tottering.  
And I myself grow old and tottering  
To leave no high example of success,  
Who feel my very faith a failure here  
Where few believe ; and I, alone of all  
Wise in the sanction of authority,  
Wield no authority — though yet, by grace  
Of circumstance, set for the space of moons  
Over this province-government to try  
The fresh enforcement of the earlier ways.  
Nor will this folk obey, nor will he heed  
Whose counsellor by compact I became.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

But all goes on from bad to worse by want  
Of that antique respect and reverence  
Which record of the wisdom-ways of Kings  
Abundantly reveals, but is not now.

How shall I bear to go into my grave  
A savior still unseen in public power,  
A wealth of wisdom, doom'd as ignorance  
To die and nevermore be known of men  
By fair performance as of Golden Kings ?

Ah ! who could quench the fervor of our crime ?  
Could Shun himself, fallen on latter days,  
Have transform'd earth to heaven, made mankind,  
Shang-te ?

Though every man perchance be good at heart,  
Born good ; yet more than all the Sages' selves  
Were needed to make perfect man born, both,  
And bred to lust and greed by age mature.  
As I believed and labor'd, so might Shun ;  
And as I fail'd, so haply would Shun fail,  
Whose faith, pride, wisdom were scarce more than mine !  
Scarce more than mine ! And as Shun stands to-day  
Criterion of perfection, so may I  
To future ages, if no fault 's confess'd,

## CONFUCIUS

Stand model and exemplar, teaching men  
The way of me, Kung-fu-tze, as of them  
The earlier Sages — ay, and serve mankind !  
For where is opportunity to help,  
There pride is justified ; and unto pride  
With claim of self-success cleaves reverence ;  
And where is reverence there all is saved ;  
And saviorhood proves the superior man ! —  
Yet from this pitiful experience  
Of practical failure I perforce resign,  
Throw down the staff of office and retire  
To some sole hermitage to meditate  
The better fortune of the Golden Days  
When wisdom was, a better fortune proven  
By mine experience of modern life  
So purposeless without authority,  
So warp'd and thwarted of accomplishment  
For want of any ancient self-restraint  
And plain obedience to command of Kings.  
For where there is not any self-restraint  
There nought is regulated ; and where nought  
Is regulated there no government  
Exists worth preservation ; and where earth  
Is nowise govern'd no superior man

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Can safely intervene to found the State.  
I shall abandon service publicly  
And give myself to setting forth in script  
The evils annall'd of their Springs, their Autumns,  
Which are not years of singleness and truth.  
By my book be I judged ; but be forgot  
As conservator crazed who cried reform  
Yet could not quench the fervor of our crime,  
Could not bring back the Golden Years of Kings ! —

Was it not fault of mine, to strive beyond  
All possibility of world-success ?  
Was not crime mine that I defied our fate,  
Sought to turn backward on earth's destiny  
Which goeth ever onward though we fall ?  
Which if we thwart we must deserve to fall ;  
Which if we foster yields our life's success,  
And thereby proves itself desirable,  
More perfect than the Ceremonials  
Of Shun, more sweet than old Proprieties ? —  
Yet, be mine Annals as mine eloquence  
Confident still of favor with the skies !

## HERACLITUS

BEHOLD the world as man perceiveth it  
(O world ! thou source of every thought of truth !)  
Call'd fire, or water, earth or any name  
For somewhat static, moveless, even though man  
Himself be judge of it that flux be all !  
Behold the world, as though perception might be  
Some passive permanence, some plethora  
Of recognition mutually inane,  
Devoid of meaning, imperceptible  
Because all-unimpressive ! Yet mine arm  
Before mine eyes passeth from point to point  
Athwart yon landscape (ay, o'er Ephesos,  
Artemis' precinct !) ; and by motion proveth  
A relativity dynamic 'twixt  
My sight and world as, still within them both,  
Its sweep impresseth alterance on the face  
Of the world ; and by its passage o'er the world  
Becomes unlike itself, mine arm no more  
As erst, but arm and world at once made new  
And by their novelty impressing on me  
Flux, flux, and flux unto the end of time.  
Why then denominate or world or water

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Or fire or earth or arm with any name  
Intended to denote a permanence,  
Implying some perception unimpress'd  
And hence impossible ? Truth were not so.  
And therefore fire and earth as men conceive them  
Are not. But flux are all things that we know ;  
And 'world' or 'life' names but the flux as whole.

The wonder is not, therefore, of the way  
Life floweth and is absolved within itself  
With every fresh desire — for how impress  
Perception save by impact ; and how else  
Might motion be, save by the alterance  
Unending, irremediable of time ?  
The wonder is not of the way we pass,  
Are born and are forgotten with the dead.  
Rather were alterance, the flux of change  
World's axiom, and physics every way  
(The Upward and the Downward Burning both)  
Built in our understanding how we move  
And breathe and face the morrow as we must.  
Necessity, for flux. And what we know  
For necessary ne'er bemarvelleth.  
The wonder, rather, that we seem to stay ;

## HERACLITUS

Are here, one moment ; there, at other while ;  
'Stablish'd and resting as we somehow seem.  
The wonder, so, that any element —  
Or very fire, or water, or dull earth —  
Remaineth very fire, water, earth,  
And not another ; how each element  
Seems untransmutive, hath identity  
Whether it be or not-be, though each thing  
Can neither be nor not-be, but (becoming !)  
In some sort must amalgamate with each  
And every other, as the law of all  
Requires, whose fundament is alterance !  
From this dilemma there were no appeal  
To proof of gods. The gods (if gods there be !)  
Either abiding still beyond space, time,  
And sharing not in motion ; or elsewise  
Being but motions of the myriad world  
Call'd archetypal, alterance none the less !  
And either way were they beyond appeal —  
For, being unmotion'd, were they nought to point  
This paradox of stillness seemingly ;  
Or, being (as needs were, were they anywise !)  
Themselves but movements of the world at large,  
Were they but type and formula indeed

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of this my proposition, not themselves  
Solutions of the mighty mystery !  
For how were Zeus, a motion, seeming Zeus  
Through countless ages ; Artemis herself,  
The symbol of life-lapse by local creed,  
Continuously Artemis, nought else ?  
Gods, elements or men, beasts, trees, or all  
Alike, true chaos of unceasing flux,  
Yet paradoxically Zeus, earth, fire,  
Artemis, air, oak, Herakleitos, each !

Lo ! were it, by some possibility,  
A bare necessity beyond escape  
That somewhat, still unchanging, lurks within  
The maelstrom of the fluxion ; gives a name  
To each momentum ; that beyond the breath  
Of birth-in-death affords identity  
To recognition ? Were it, that I take  
An hidden axiom and reluctantly  
Accept a fundament occult till now ?  
Urge I not every hour that what we see  
For bare necessity were understood  
Beyond necessity to understand ?  
And prove I not both terms of axiom —

## HERACLITUS

The status, as the fluxion — equally  
Prime datum of the world wherein we move ?  
The movement and the mover ! — Yet wherein  
Were paradox precluded, that we say :  
I move, Zeus moveth ; earth is earth ; and water  
Water ; as fire, fire though it melt  
And pass in every flickering ? How might Zeus  
Be to his motion, I unto mine arm's  
Translation show related, when ' itself '  
Must be, as by hypothesis, without  
Share in self-passage nor defined by change  
Of relativity to all things else —  
Though of itself nought if it may not move ?  
And what of alterance then when passage-fact  
Precludes intrinsic inference of aught  
Moveless, unpassing ? If relation lie  
In truth 'twixt state and state, and such we call  
Motion ; yet what, within such mystic stream,  
The very self-distinctiveness of flux  
From each self-state as state, which cannot be  
As state determinate of passingness  
Which could demark it but impermanently  
(Save passingness be endless emptiness !)  
And so transform it into flux anew ?

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

If, as indeed I take the novel truth,  
There be unceasingness within our flow  
(Ha ! were it that very flow's unceasingness  
Which by non-termination yields to each  
Moment and aspect an enduringness  
Inherent only for the fluxion's self  
Its universalness of reference,  
And cheats us with supposed identity  
Of many moments joint-establishing ! )  
Whereby such fluxion shows distinctively  
For alterance (requiring permanence  
For standard and criterion !) — what, within  
Such duplex datum of our universe,  
Can thus, with appeal to any sanity,  
Be said of such relationship as lies  
'Twixt alterance and change-nonentity,  
Whether itself were fluxional or no ?  
And if itself 's shown static — what were then  
Its own relationship, as status, toward  
The primal fluxion — secondary crux  
Interminably self-repetitive  
In logic-regress beyond man's conceit ?  
I pause before such paradox, whose terms  
Now first confront me among sons of men,

## HERACLITUS

Now first demand solution. Future years  
Shall haply see solution ; haply find  
The task impossible, to rectify  
Such rift within Necessity, the One ! —

Yet not the same task, not such paradox  
Precise as now appalls me among men  
The first and therefore last, as all truths flow :  
Necessity, but passingness writ large,  
Like world without or pause or permanency  
(So reason tells, interpreter of sense  
In just perception of duplexity)  
Save as we name it so, we know not wherefore,  
And seize the simulacrum to explain  
The shown reality — and call it Same,  
Though unto every thought respectively  
A different necessity-of-truth !  
To none my same dilemma, though the name  
Of Herakleitos' fluxion aye endure !  
Some task made different by the lapse of time,  
By newer information, newer needs  
Of understanding truth-necessity,  
Yet seeming-same within their universe  
Of logic-wrought procedure : whereunto

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Shall many minds attain, for whom my fame  
Means nought than early rumor, who shall stand  
Confronting, seemingly as I confront  
This paradox. And many shall attempt  
Evasion, or delude with trickery.  
For some shall say : The paradox disproves  
All possibility of movement made —  
For how can somewhat pass and yet be same ? —  
Forgetful how this motion of my hand,  
Though at each instant status in itself  
(As we imagine instance cognizable !)  
Yet passes, point to point, perceptibly,  
And proves unto perception, truth's best judge,  
This wonder-universe of earth, of water,  
Fire and Ephesos within my sight,  
Known thus for motion all though each bear name —  
Known for perceivers each (not plethoræ  
Of blank passivity !) beyond all doubt  
Even as I (ha ! might the changeless I  
Resolve all paradox, itself that knows  
Continuously through the change of each  
Perception, feeling on interminably  
Beyond and through each moment, who can say ?),  
Yea, even as I — and proving thus my life

## **HERACLITUS**

Impression'd of a world. — And some shall cheat  
Themselves, to doubt perception-reasoning  
And base truth in denial ! Yet, O world,  
Can any, sane, deny truth were of thee ?

## ÆSCHYLUS

THEY murmur, then, that I (as they demur)  
Unmask the Mysteries, declare to men  
Matters beyond the scope of tragedy,  
From speech taboo'd, perchance precluded from  
Mere human understanding ? Let them rail !  
What garland could be grander on the brows  
Of victory than this protestation ? Who  
Might flatter to the clouds this poetry,  
As he who calls my name, forsooth, accursed  
For blasphemy, revealing sacred things ?  
So much for them, the mob, who only praise  
When most denouncing. Them I thank with scorn.

Them, too, I thank that they have subtler still  
Suggested to imagination much  
Toward some yet greater work than they deplore !  
Some vision of a gnarl'd protagonist  
(As some bolt-stricken oak in Tempe's vale)  
Prometheus-like, snatching from Zeus for men  
The swift fire-secret, and for punishment  
(Even as the oak by disembowelling)  
Suffering vast maltreatment, though at soul

## ÆSCHYLUS

But more confirm'd in mighty righteousness  
By each injustice. Only let the mob  
Threat but my life on Areopagos,  
Torment me round with clamor — that my heart  
Be wrath-inflamed to rigor — and I 'll make  
The master-piece : the Master-Hero Bound  
Defiant and triumphant : Gods and all  
Belittled by the unswerved suffering Man—  
The suffering Man unswerved, the soul at last  
Of tragedy and heart of holiest song  
Triumphant by distress over all Gods !  
The master-music : though the veil be rent ;  
And high Olympos, mere earth-mount at last,  
Cast down Zeus' throne before the feet of men,  
Doff every vestige of eternal snow —  
And flower with thyme and honey ; to the taste  
Of every soul a liberation, though  
Come sorrow with responsibility,  
Come suffering with the fresh awakening :  
The pain of parting from the father-care  
Of God Olympian, seen at last in truth  
A tyranny and nobly cast aside !  
Such my Prometheus.—Let them rail at that  
(Come Dionysia-season) an they will !

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

For me an inspiration; and for them  
Boar-baiting, bull-bewildering as with goads ;  
Prometheus shall be : man exposing all  
(The sacredest, most holily taboo'd,  
The most mysterious) to the sight of man  
And men's instruction ; that an holier truth  
(That secret of the breast Promethean,  
The doom of Zeus for all his tyranny !)  
Rise from the ashes and establish us  
In sacredness if not in mystery,  
In consecration and an open heart.

And yet — might any Order be not Zeus,  
He of the Law ? Is there a law beyond  
Law's full impersonation ? And if such  
There seem (those Moirai, dread Eumenides  
Of myth), swells not the name and thought call'd Zeus  
To fill the perfected requirement ?  
Might I, save for some Areopagos  
Protective from the momentary spite  
Of mobs impulsive, with impunity  
Assail the old-time myth-authorities ;  
Save, as I say, for force conservative,  
The middle-source of justice, tyrant still

## ÆSCHYLUS

Over the reckless demos-novelty ?  
Shall I be wrath demotic tearing down  
All institution, when but Institute  
Alone gives warrant of free thought and speech ?  
Prometheus hath taken indeed a shape  
Such as my wrathful mood against the mob  
Of archaists impell'd, such as my right  
To mouth deep-searching and wild-wingèd words  
Demanded in assertion ; but shall mine  
Half-misconception bide as Titan bound,  
Binding mine art, cramping mine utterance still  
To mere defiance and self-petulance  
Protestive, when to act constructively,  
Upbuilding and establishing, were best ;  
And best were to abide with justice yet  
Staunch partisan of Zeus, who, though he grow  
A greater Zeus, were Areopagite  
Still, an establish'd custom from the first ?  
It is because I did accept the myth  
Erroneously indicating Zeus  
For interloper that I fail'd to feel  
Futurity for his ; but now I see  
The Zeus-succession but the Chronos-rule  
From first, the Zeus-anticipation in

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The old pre-Titan forcefulness. And thus  
Be there some reconciliation found  
At last, some yielding of rigidity  
(Even as the oak, shear'd of the lightning-blast,  
May skyward rear anew some crown of green  
And the blue shine down and be but heaven the more!);  
Some Zeus-approximation of the man  
Roused to a wider-eyed austerity  
Of ripe world-insight recognizing doom  
For just and pardon in humility ;  
Some earth-approximation of the God,  
Humaner by the conquest ! That my tongue  
Shall sing the man's unbinding and his end  
In stalwart service 'neath authority  
As interceder for the human race :  
The Fire-Bearer, Master-Foresight Freed —  
Whose cult obtains throughout our Attika.

And thus shall this my trilogy enhance  
The potency of that wise authority  
Over Athenai exercised by them  
On whose defence I must at last rely  
For privilege to speak whilst speak I must !  
Thus shall the Gods not unassisted sway

## ÆSCHYLUS

Athenai's destinies, but by my song  
Of songs renew authority outworn  
Over the demos ; and these archaists,  
Wholly unjustified of blasphemy,  
Yet win by will of mine and with me stand  
Leaders conservative to teach themselves  
How truest reverence springs in freest thought,  
In freest speech anent the truths of earth ;  
The clear conviction (not the skeptic rant)  
Found in most-revelation — trusting Zeus  
To test of any searching, any proof ;  
Nor veil'd in jugglery of dark taboo. —  
'T is thus that I reveal the Mysteries,  
Unmasking with my mask the sacred things !

## PARMENIDES

ALTHOUGH mine Elea be a little town  
Unlike Athenai, yet the wide world all  
Is nowise larger than her atomy —  
Not even Athenai, like although unlike :  
This strange vast city whereto mine old-age  
Hath come to wonder at her ways of men.  
For, were aught other than another thing  
(Or seas or men or cities equally),  
Were then nonentity between their bounds  
'Soe'er approximate though they might be.  
And therefore in no rational intent  
Can there be here Athenai, there afar  
Elea, though the journey I have made —  
Ah ! dogma blessèd to the wanderer  
For whom an Elea, though a little town,  
Is birthplace ; home-belovèd, being an hearth !  
In sooth, Athenai is but still a town,  
Yet of herself, so far as she hath truth  
Of any being, is she as the world :  
And I yet in that Elea, though I came  
O'er leagues of purple ocean to be here,

## PARMENIDES

And there no longer. Thus indeed I fail  
Defeat the law of reason. In my heart  
All is as Elea though I dwell not there,  
Though if in space and time I seem at least  
Here present. Elea was a little town ;  
Yet in herself teacheth the truth of things !

How then explain the semblance that I came  
Even from Elea to arrive at last  
After such leagues of laboring overseas  
In strange Athenai ? How indoctrinate  
This contrast, to the clarity of truth ?  
How reconcile this lorn nostalgia  
Of him the old man wandering, lonely  
(I laughed at it in new-come colonists !),  
Lost from his Elea toward yon agora ;  
If that the Elea straining at his heart  
Be proof that neither time nor space hath truth,  
But all is still but Elea and the years  
Of youth and wisdom and the praise of men ?  
Perchance, indeed, that unity I preach  
Were this of yearning, unforgetfulness,  
Presence in very absence, if by pain  
And loss in separation very real ?

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And how acknowledge, how construct anew,  
Such scheme of unity noetical  
In face of opposition and defeat ?  
For here what waits me ? That shrewd Sokrates  
Whom no man can withstand, whose ruthless test  
(So I have heard from friends who urge me to it)  
Is soul-examination (as I now  
Examine self perforce !) — he waits for me  
Even in that agora to try my truth  
By his new method (so unlike mine own  
Before this hour), to examine me  
(Himself a young man ; beautiful, no doubt,  
As every god-like intellect implies),  
Alas — and find nostalgia writ large  
Upon my spirit contradicting clean  
The world's illusiveness to men of reason,  
Elea's unity with all things here ! —  
How have I erst been wont to reason with  
Some skeptical disciple ; how, denounce  
The counter-dogma of the Ephesian sage ?  
Let me rehearse, and reassure myself  
Therewith, the folly of the counter-creed  
Which Herakleitos foisted on the world,  
The craze of contradiction ! — How become

## PARMENIDES

(How not-be in the moment that we seem ?)

When truth is, and is-not 's nonentity ? —

Ay, so oft-time the formula hath served \*  
Whilst all was at the acme and the world  
Was yet in fact but Elea unto me ;  
And nought was known, save as by vague report,  
Of league-on-league of weltering, or the sense  
Of oceans intervening, or the sight  
Of strangers cold-contain'd and arrogant,  
Indifferent to Elea as to aught  
Beyond their agora : themselves at home  
As I in Elea ; their unity  
With me, worst mockery ! Did Ephesos  
Vomit her sage, a corpse, upon these streets  
To gibber of death-throes and the charnel-house  
(Dread proofs of scarce-illusive alterance !),  
I were not more unnerved, shaken at soul,  
To meet with Sokrates and speak with him.  
I should have wiped away the universe  
Consistently with qualities of sense,  
To wean me of this Elea inwardly,  
Before I undertook to cross the seas !  
And is not Elea quality of sense ?

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Yet how maintain the doctrine, when at heart—  
By this new method, self-examining,  
Which omen-like forewarneth me of him—  
Gnaweth a contradiction worse than death  
Which will not as a ghost be laid away,  
But as a Fury feasts upon my frame !  
How can illusion warrant me these throes  
Of yearning homewardly, whilst nevermore  
Perchance shall any save the inward eye  
Behold that Elea, town where I was born :  
Which is not as Athenai ? — Ah, here comes  
(With Zenon, my disciple, urging on)  
A lout so ugly that I laugh at him —  
Not Sokrates, surely ! I had never dream'd  
A visitant so ludicrous. — Ah, well !  
If there be any truth of Unity,  
No Reason can be in a shape so crude,  
So unlike Zenon or Parmenides,  
So utterly unlike the wisdom-form  
Of gracious balance, proud benignity !  
None in mine Elea are so dull as this one,  
Doubtless. Our Elea shall have victory !

## PHIDIAS

THE Gods are working with me as I work ;  
I, Pheidias, sculptor ; helpmate of the man  
Perikles : maker of the homes of Gods,  
These temples ; sponsor to the homes of men,  
This town Athenai and Akropolis.

The Gods are working with me here on high  
In air above Athenai, where the fane  
Of Parthenon already rears around  
The Form chryselephantine. Round the Form  
Athena : virgin matron, patroness  
Of the City-State, preceptress of the mind  
Of man : concentres all the orb of earth,  
From Babylon to Aithiopia,  
Cold Chersonesos or the Hesperides.

And very near around me and this Form  
(Hid from my workshop only by these walls  
Of Parthenon, and unto memory clear)  
Lie glittering Ilissos, Lykabettos  
Where Phoibos riseth in this summer-time,  
And broad Hymettos with its dusky green.  
And, closer yet (though whither wearying sun  
Sinks to his rest), springs Areopagos

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Where weighty words still sway the destinies  
Of life and death in matters of our State.  
And yonder (through these walls I picture them  
Sun-sparkling) lie Phaleron and the port  
Peiraicus ; and, though further westwardly,  
The way Eleusis-ward (mysterious site,  
Emblem of piety) along the plain  
Between the hills and 'mid the almond-groves.  
The world of human power or sacred hope  
Alike concentres with me and this Form.  
Mine art embodies in the name of earth  
(Material, practical, political :  
As reverent) all that wisdom which, without  
Athena for demonstrance, were as breath  
Too subtle for the senses, unlike earth  
And therefore nought for men material,  
Void as a chaos for our politic. —  
There are who doubt them even of the Gods,  
Holding the final truth mere fire or air.  
Some few the hypercritical deny  
Athena ; and deserve the poison-cup  
For State-corruption and seditioning.  
And yet no poison-cup would still them quite,  
No punishment which breeds a sympathy

## PHIDIAS

Eradicate the sacrilegious rant;  
Only the clear conviction of mine art  
As fundamental pedagogic fact  
Embodying Godhood, giving unto men  
Proof positive (practical, political:  
As reverent) of a true divinity  
Beyond all myth and legend. Let the myth  
Elude belief — no piety need fear  
To fall with that! I turn and men shall turn  
Unto Athena sculptured by my hand  
Here in her temple on Akropolis—  
And must believe. I work with my mere hand  
As the man Perikles commanded me  
To help to rear Athenai, fit abode  
For Gods or men. But, whilst my chisel plies  
And flakes of ivory plate leap in the light,  
I know the Gods are Gods by virtue of  
This beauty of chryselephantine Form.—  
The Gods are working with me as I work.—

Completed! — Truth perfected ; no stroke more  
To make ? — Hand wearies and the chisel falls  
In a moment cold and dull'd. And all were as  
The Gods were not; Athena were a doubt;

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Athenai some ephemera ; and myself,  
'Spoil'd of my body's power, suddenly  
Widely awaked in mind, as skeptic too !  
I, for the nonce as the young Sokrates ;  
Strangely akin in new bewilderment  
To Anaxagoras who makes of thought  
The Gods' thin effigy in place of stone ;  
Parmenides and their unholy rout  
Who work no beauty, but disturb our faith  
With pleading, counter-pleading of the case  
Man had no right to enter against Gods —  
Even though brought on Areopagos ! —  
Against the Gods who only ask of men  
Belief and piety and workfulness  
Unto the archetypal truth of Form  
Which cannot be of fire or thought or air !  
Alas ! I suddenly, as Sokrates,  
As any Eleatic anciently  
(All alike, whatsoe'er the teaching, false  
To any illustration outwardly  
Of presence and proportion, ay, to art)  
Question the clear conviction ; from my hand  
Let fall with the cold tool my piety,  
My loyalty to him, that Perikles ;

## PHIDIAS

My serviceableness to City-State ! —  
Serve I the State so truly then who carve  
The solid semblance to persuade the world  
Unto belief I fear may be but myth,  
Myth only, and no universal truth ?  
The chisel falls from the fingers ; cold and dull'd  
It lies in the silvery flakes ; and with it lies  
My spirit, vacant of divinity.  
The Form still stands a form material,  
Material only, meaningless anent  
Truth archetypal. I have rear'd above  
Athenai but some domicile of power  
To tyrannize upon the souls of men ;  
Some image born of force, projected of  
Mine overweening blind credulity —  
Ignorant of the nature of myself —  
And Perikles' persuasion. Tyrants must  
Conserve the Gods unto their own support ;  
Delude the demos to mistake mere form,  
The physical body, for what lies beyond  
Physics : the fiction of the judging mind  
(The mind, which ne'er were perfect nor complete,  
But hath its being by some form-of-growth  
And therefore cannot finish and lose faith

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

As now I fail of heart in finishing !),  
Which weighs my sculpture unto aimlessness,  
Denies it purpose and excuse to be  
Save as it serve at worst some archetype  
Of purpose formative not in the Form.  
And any purpose, if the Gods but fall,  
Condemns my huge Athena either way. —  
I doubt me if there be in truth a God !  
It is in truth as one or two have said,  
Endanger'd for their wise temerity !  
'T is true the mind is verily a form  
Quite unlike matter (leaving matter nought  
But inchoate formlessness — as now I sense  
This Anaxagoras !) ; and the over-mind,  
The formal mind of all, hath in it nought  
Of frame material, but breath alone,  
Fire or feeling, as the doctrine goes !  
What then am I with this Athena's frame ?  
A child, a plaything of this Perikles,  
A prostitute to plans political,  
A maker of impostures ! If as men  
Our bodies be but clogs upon the soul,  
But prisons of the spirit, as rumor saith,  
Is there an art at all still worthy of

## PHIDIAS

A man's endeavor ; when his every hope  
Should be to rid his aspiration from  
The deadweight of the tenement of clay ?  
(The Eleusinians give some hint of this.)  
The poets may be mightier than I  
With all the crimes of their impieties ;  
And but because they sing earth incomplete,  
Life tragic and imperfect : Aischylos  
Or Sophokles alike leaving a world  
Which, beautiful but in-the-making, stands  
Fit to be ever new, though Godlessly.  
Philosophers may soon be born of men  
Who, surer than the surest yet of them,  
Shall yield irrefragable logic-form  
To doctrines of their immaterial  
Formative verity — and leave me here,  
Me and my works with wreck of all the Gods,  
An outgrown childhood, plaything thrown aside  
Even with Athenai and Akropolis  
While the world centres in some other sphere. —  
The Gods are perfect, finish'd — with my work!  
The Gods with me are weary, as I lie !

Ah ! but the Form chryselephantine — see,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Yon line unbeautiful : not modell'd quite  
Unto the archetype I feel in me  
(Unfinishable, imperfectible !),  
The searching wisdom of the frame divine,  
Itself at growth within me as I breathe  
And move and have my being of its power,  
Demanding imitation in the clay  
Interminably to its modelling :  
Which thus alone is anywise transfused.  
One hour's brief laboring will set that right  
(As near as man may e'er achieve an end  
Which groweth in itself unendingly)  
Eternally as no man than myself  
(Not Polykleitos, he the strong and new),  
Labor he ne'er so many, many days,  
Might ever hope to render it correct ! —  
What were the barren breath-mentality,  
The truth of air or fire, were not we men  
Of frame material and with our hands  
Laborers to embody the divine,  
If only point by point interminably,  
In archetypal and enduring fact ?  
We are the children of the Gods indeed ;  
Our works are playthings of divinity ;

## PHIDIAS

Perikles, sponsor to Olympos here ;  
And I by inspiration fitted toward  
This rectification of humanity.  
The beauty of the body : it is man's truth,  
Whereunto each high thought, though thin as air,  
Nurtureth and approximates the frame  
Of every man of men in some degree.  
What though the beauty grow elusivewise  
Beyond our labor, even with each high thought  
That stimulates the sense to self-defeat ?  
We can still labor, winning truth in work  
So long as work is to us.— Whence I feel  
I have won beauty by this victory now  
Over impiety ; can grasp this tool  
Anew to more assured dexterity  
Toward absolute proportion and design.  
The work were finish'd never, though we fail  
And cease. The hope eternal is through all :  
Wisdom, the maid Athena, matron o'er  
The glittering city on Akropolis.  
The Gods leap with me to my feet afresh,  
Stoop as I stoop, and grasp the keen-edged tool !

## EURIPIDES

WE are but human, and the human fume  
Of crime and passion reeks within the brain  
Pathetic, tragic, beautiful by proof  
Indeed of incompleteness and the need  
Of 'Gods' and 'Law' to make intelligent  
The stultification. We indeed are men ;  
But by our partial manhood must imply  
An over-humanhood, a 'God' o'er all.  
And therefore doth the Godhood through our griefs  
Gleam forth and render radiant the scene  
Of daily anguish and the agony  
Of incompletion to these minds and hearts  
That feel a oneness deeper than the dreams  
Of love, a wider heritage than hate,  
Yet spend by doom our force in lust and wrath.  
But therefore are our passions and our shames  
Sources of noble wonder, of dismay,  
May be, but of an high tranquillity,  
Of speculation through infinitude.  
On, therefore ! be the tragedy infused  
With present limitation, let the theme  
Lift itself not beyond the ways and words

## EURIPIDES

Of poor humanity, that through those ways  
Be teaching subtler, surer than the mode  
Of dream archaic, than the dignity  
Of great discourse without the throb of blood,  
Yea, than this Sophokles' serenity  
(His, who 'd ascribe unto unmoral Gods  
The fiat that absolves mere man from blame!),  
Scornful of sin, ignorant of remorse :  
Remorse, self-blight of insufficiency ! —  
Medeia ! be thou mad amongst thine own,  
Slayer of thy self-seed in blind despair  
To spite world's huge injustice : that all men  
May shrink and shudder, take the truth to soul,  
And so learn of themselves, achieve the law  
Of self-distrust and be, beyond all Gods  
(The Gods, but men impractical, inane !),  
Efficient by the moderation ; through  
The rule of self-restraint, all-powerful !

Another (in this hesitation now),  
Another than myself (this Sophokles ?)  
Had fallen on recantation, writ the Fates  
Large over this Medeian manuscript ;  
And lost the tragic conscience out of all.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

He had implied some vast ship-engineery  
Whereof my murderer was but some beam,  
Some wavering mast, at most some straining cord  
Unwitting of the wallow and the gale  
That drove her, her the blameless ministrant  
Of powers beyond the ken of human soul ;  
And thus had saved her through self-ignorance  
And allegation of a truth-unknown :  
Strange contradiction ! Stranger paradox  
Yet, that I, by admission of her guilt  
Self-known and self-compell'd, have given to man  
Self-mastery by failure self-imposed ;  
Omniscience by denial of a law  
Beyond ourselves : as we are source of law  
In high internal conflict ; in ourselves  
Peace-recompensed by loss of our peace all ! —  
It is a truth new-earn'd : as this my soul  
Is new and earns (as all this Age must earn !)  
A fresh-form'd understanding. Here we stand,  
Athenai fronted by the worst of wars,  
Which unto any man sane and aware  
Must spell in the end disaster : haply then  
The ruin of our great god-founded State.  
And what shall then remain unless the soul

## EURIPIDES

Be its own theatre, and the choral ode  
Of deep endurance 'neath the ruin'd rule  
Of a world undone rise as the pæan now  
Sounds in the stillness of an Attic sky  
Above the breathing of the hearkening throng ?  
For I foresee the ruin of this world  
Of Perikles and proud Aspasia  
At hands of Lakedaimons, Dorian clods  
Who only by their heritage of tune  
(Longtime transferr'd unto our choristers)  
Are better than the brutes or have in them  
The sweet self-gratulation of an art.  
But therefore stand we all confronted now  
With opportunity : to base our hope,  
Not in the unknown God-imaginings  
Which with Athenai ruin finally  
But, in the self-known ruin wherethrough we too,  
Though slaughtering these children of our brain  
And heart and soul, though casting unto dogs  
These gems of tragic purport, yet shall offer  
Ourselves unto the world forever proven  
Of purport tragic though the Gods are nought.  
And thus I face the future cataclysm  
With my Medeia warning all mankind —

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

These people of Athenai who must wake  
To find the Fates within us and our theme  
Of beauty born anew with every man  
Or high or low who knows within himself  
The order'd conflict conscientiously.

This we must know who soon must slay with  
hands

Our offspring : else shall we be, Spartan-like,  
Lost to ourselves forever, with the fall  
Of Gods and heroes as the Long Walls fall.  
I prophesy ; and seek to leave with life  
Example of the strength within the soul,  
Which, though it yield to savage hate, inspires  
The truth with self-nobility, and lives ! —

Enough for life, though it inflict a death  
Ennobling in itself the shame and sin ;  
Enough for this Athenai which with throes  
Shall fall and fling to ruin Tragedy :  
Athenai, beautiful if only fill'd  
With passion of self-knowledge whilst it slays.  
What, too, of death, if Attika must die  
Even as Alkestis, yielding all herself :  
That world, the wider if less worthy State,

## EURIPIDES

May linger past the life or death of these ?  
What was Alkestis when I wrote of her ?  
A something new unto the sight of man ?  
A fond return to life forevermore  
By virtue of the death vicarious ?  
And shall some wrestling with the spirit of death,  
Some soul-of-perishing that saves all things,  
Renew for all-time this Athenai too,  
If perishing but with the conscious wish  
That world shall pass to some more-worthiness  
Over, beyond anything She hath known ?  
I pause before the threshold of the thought—  
I, herald of new eras unto men  
Of pure self-knowledge though Medeia slay  
And death ensue unto the very soul ;  
Of knowledge purified and endless life  
By virtue of Alkestis, the new thought  
Of self-devotion unto death achieving,  
Not by some Fate but ever beyond Fate, —  
Identifying wisdom with the selfhood  
Of all things known though these be not of  
self —  
A victory o'er death and endless life.  
Euripides hath enter'd on the stage,

## **POEMS OF PERSONALITY**

**And, though he pass, shall leave the tragic world  
Not as before, but human holily ;  
More faith-felt by avoidance of all creed ;  
And thus involving Godliness through all.**

## SOCRATES

WHETHER it be the voice oracular,  
Possession demoniacal ; or no ?  
Whether the prompting force infallible  
Be inspiration ? — Let me meet myself  
Abroad as in some spirit-agora,  
Stand face to face with me, greet me and  
pause  
Self-disputatious ; holding dialogue  
Silent, alone within the mind of me  
To clear the question of equivocacy ;  
Determining, defining mine own terms  
The truer to understand the point,  
This question of divinity in me,  
The source of insight and intelligence  
Where reason fails. Ay, let me reason of it  
As with those casual acquaintances  
Or pupils, forcing freely from my soul  
Her premises, her preassumptive truths  
Wherewith, by interplay of stimuli  
In logic dialectical, to prove  
Some ultimate position tenable

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Anent the deity within the man :  
Whether mine ignorance be sibylline !

The power of reason and its limit in me ?  
Man holds opinion, goes abroad to meet  
His fellow, finds within the counter-man  
Counter-opinion ; sets to reason with him  
(As I with me myself in singleness)  
Each against each ; and reaches at the last  
Some third opinion, fruit of all that toil.  
Grant me, the third opinion is the best,  
Compounded of the two now both disproved  
(Light born of darkness, truth of two untruths —  
Small satisfaction !), and that at the last  
Both disputants maintain it, each in sort,  
Though haply with no final sympathy.  
Part then these two, and go their different ways  
Out through our agora. Each meets anew  
Some disputant and sets to reason with him.  
Then from the three fresh-provable untruths  
Arise two truths, not in themselves alike,  
Being compounded of three lies distinct  
In various combination, which go forth  
Into the world, forever losing truth

## SOCRATES

By fresh compounding, never to the end  
Wholly alike (nay, unlike more and more ?),  
Yet each true to the soul that sweareth it,  
And all (as many as there may be men ?)  
Of equal-seeming self-authority !  
So to our reasoning is never rest ;  
So to our truth come echoes of untruth,  
Reverberations from the primal theme  
As many as we meet and teach of men.  
And therefore in the soul as many dreams  
Of half-truth as there may be voices in us  
Of man or god testing, protesting, doubting,  
Questioning, reasoning of our premisings ;  
Ev'n as I test in skeptic singleness  
The virtue of our reason-faculty.  
Thus test the premise of our power to reason —  
Conceivable but as the power of speech  
Within to bandy half-truth with the tongue  
Of men or gods. Can such an instrument  
Of untruth and of inconclusiveness  
Determine in my soul's-own dialogue  
The postulate of man or god within me  
(Whose voice hath seem'd so demoniacal)  
To supplement the range of this same reason

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And yield authority where reason hath none ?  
A clear conception of the difficulty  
(Won in the bandying of words within  
Self-antinomial, interpreting  
Each to itself by alteration through  
The contact self-conceptual), the problem —  
The reasoner to say within his soul :  
By right of reason (bandyings of untruth  
Through thousand half-truths !) I pronounce him true  
Or false (him god or man) who speaks beyond  
All logic and all insight reasonable !

Yet are we men ; or true or false, half-gods  
In truth-assurance ! And as man-god I find  
Mine ignorance self-sibylline, self-taught ;  
With, in a sort, some sure authority  
Where reason fails. Some tongue divine there is  
(Apollon, Zeus, Athena, what care I ?)  
That leadeth in this dialogue, outweighs  
The skeptic inference of nescience  
And asks reconstitution from the first  
Of logic-method and false-premising.  
For of the reason reason's way hath proved  
Equivocacy — by what analogue,

## SOCRATES

What test demonstrable, unequivocal  
(Apart from reason !), were the reason all ?  
And thus, at first thought, must the reason-way  
Be self-annihilating, worse than void  
Because delusively aspiring to  
Authoritatively deny itself —  
Bewilderment, to reason contrary !  
But the god-man in us will never yield  
The right to question and determine for us  
Immediate false-and-true, even if beyond  
Each tentative decision opens wide  
New vista of truth-possibility  
Which relegates as unbelieved untruth  
The narrower first conclusion. Still the process  
Of searching constitutes authority ;  
The purpose must assume to guide the mind  
With motive final, though each stage by stage  
Within the dialectic alter yet  
All minute definition of our aim  
With shift of standpoint — as my pacing feet  
Here in my courtyard change the shifting sight  
Through door and portico of shuffling crowds ;  
Yet ever bear me back and forth within  
The parallels of some soul-perfecting

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Itself as felt self-fix'd, unalterable,  
And lending logic to the swarming scene  
Else without purport, aimless soullessly.  
Therefore a new conception of the soul  
Springs of itself : a self-authority  
Within the reason, self-condemnatory  
Indeed (if those old premises, proved false,  
Were still maintain'd as standpoint of debate),  
But by the inward dialogue self-proved  
Final, demonic, in best sense divine.  
For see, friend (may I call my scholar-self,  
That leads me whilst he seems to follow still,  
Friend whilst the talk flows on and knowledge comes  
With personal sympathy in this self-soul ?),  
For see how every man within himself  
Stands — not a mere untried equivocal  
Opinion isolate from aught of truth,  
Else in the flux of a void of skepticism ;  
But — each within himself as dialogue,  
Protagonist and chorus of the truth,  
Himself the truth, himself the tragedy  
That finds full definition but in death  
Of one, in sympathetic passing o'er  
To new scenes through the theatre of the world —

## SOCRATES

New selfhood — of the many to spread truth  
Fresh-learn'd by witness of lost falsity :  
The tragic meaning ! See how every growth  
Proves but self-definition (in itself,  
The continuity each concept lacks  
Beyond the moment's premising), soe'er  
Corrected, still identical as no  
Twice-held opinion ! Therefore growth itself,  
By virtue of conclusive questioning,  
Proved the all-saving truth !

'T is thus I learn  
Self-taught to solve the dim antinomy  
As never in mere dialogue with men  
Might the truth give and take to true effect.  
For see how closer to the truth I stand  
Who talk within me, who in hearkening  
And counter-talk take instant sympathy  
(That exercise of very voice divine)  
Which no man with his neighbor feeleth so  
Whole and all-grasping as when soul with self  
Commune and mutually win the way  
Of comprehension ! Thus by this communing  
I feel the demon for the truth's own fact ;  
My inward sight (conclusive of the views

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of both inquirers, by hypothesis),  
The perfect sanction and authority —  
And need none other : proving reason nought  
Of mere opinion solely, but itself  
The process of opinion-alterance,  
The growth intelligent within the soul  
(True in degree as sympathy inheres  
Instead of isolation, comprehension  
In place of demarcation — as in me now !),  
That meets and talks with men and meets their  
views  
With counterview born of the gendering  
Of soul in soul, the insight sibylline. —  
Why forth into the agora, when truth  
Comes final and insistive thus within ?  
Why forth to processes of reasoning  
Imperfect, self-destructive ; when the way  
Of reason, method, logic I have learn'd  
Alone within my house apart from men ?  
But might I not in converse yet explain them  
The loftier definition and so serve  
The cause of clear conception in the mind  
By leading men each to commune alone  
With self and so experience in self

## SOCRATES

(Not then ascribable to other minds  
Nor any mere opinion here or there)  
The truth-assurance, hear the voice divine ?  
For thus were I conclusive of mankind,  
The continuity of other men,  
Their growth, their self-persuasion, guarantee  
And warrant of authority as truth;  
Outward, as inwardly, that very voice !

## SOPHOCLES

NOTHING too much ! — My prosperous old-age  
Were proof sufficient of the paradigm.  
Nothing too much : gnomic of my career ! —  
Aischylos' wrath, Euripides' unrest  
(Each rival, he the loftier, earlier one  
Or he the versatile of nowadays),  
At odds with fortune ; ay, whilst I work on,  
At harmony with all things, heartily,  
Happily moulding beauty of this breath  
Of times antique, to-day's, to-morrow's truth  
Alike, in terms and tones accepted yet  
Of the old, old stories, tales heroical  
Dear to the Attic heart as to mine own.  
Aischylos knew the old nobility  
Indeed, and worthily did mouth of it  
A scene high-sounding ; but himself was moved  
Too deeply as by horror, felt of truth  
Some secret shame and somewhat blamed in men  
Their subtlest reverence, best piety  
Of faith, their fair assumption that the gods  
Are from reproach immune ; himself thereby —  
Through effort clearly to establish Zeus

## SOPHOCLES

Above mere blame, habilitate the truth —  
Betray'd into impiety perchance  
By strange portrayal of a Zeus impure  
Self-justified in tyranny. Howbeit,  
Was Aischylos at odds with Attic taste,  
Safest criterion of sanity ;  
Taste which demandeth no self-justifier  
For Zeus Olympian, but sees in him  
Embodiment of sanction ; all his deeds  
Themselves criterial of justice. So  
Was Aischylos at odds with earth and found  
Too much of meaning in the mighty myth  
For man to master and make art of it.  
And thus, forsooth, he fail'd. Euripides  
Is of another mould, but no less fails.  
For him, the too-much lieth in a zeal  
To reconstruct, make something new of truth,  
Plainly half-impious in denying much  
Men must believe, be there but gods at all ;  
A zeal too much to substitute for myth  
The lore of merely men, to feel and speak  
Men as they are, though unheroical  
And far too homely for our tragedy.  
His ways betray their failure, that they feel

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Scarce horror, scarce a shame, but sympathy  
For failure. E'en, his plays would seem to teach  
Not reverence for godhood nor for men  
Moderate and potent, but for men (unlike,  
Far too unlike mine own prosperity  
And harmony of competence !) themselves  
Similar in their unprosperity  
To him who made them not as heroes are.  
'T is thus with Aischylos, Euripides,  
And all who yield too much unto themselves.  
Unmoved I make men as they ought to be—  
Men failing alone by Fate, if fail they must  
(Crush'd nor as by tyranny divine nor lost  
Of any seed of weakness in themselves) ;  
Heroic, high : and in myself reflect  
Lustre of ancient mythus all my days.  
Such as the marble works of Perikles  
Or perfect Pheidias is mine old-age,  
Serene, unmoved, at harmony with all  
Of good or ill, one with our Attic taste,  
Calm in Kolonos though the Long Walls fall,  
Which fate forefend unto our piety !—

Nothing too much. — And am I calm at heart

## SOPHOCLES

Whilst tottereth Athenai, and the men  
Who made her glorious die day by day  
Before me, and the years of them are o'er  
Who should have been eternal; when the times  
(Even in this interval of Spartan peace)  
Not as by Fate, but as by human fault,  
Fall from their leading and forget their name  
Who bless'd and still should bless with memory  
The place that once possess'd them ? Am I calm ?  
Might I write, all unmoved, of such as them ?  
Of gods-made-men, of men heroical  
Who labor'd and achieved, yet, by some flaw  
Of the human in them, suffer'd and are lost ?  
Were not the tragedy I might produce  
If moved by sympathy with former friends  
Something superior to the perfect piece ;  
Something which Aischylos, Euripides,  
Each may have sought if blindly, may have said  
Somewhat though I have miss'd ? This Aischylos,  
Portray'd he not Zeus reconciled with men  
By understanding face to face, by speech,  
More potent even than a Fate unnamed ?  
This fervent, multiple Euripides,  
Sings he not somewhat as of man who works

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And partially prevails ? Did Perikles  
Perfect yon Propylaia, yet and fell  
(Ah ! like these human of Euripides !)  
Grief-stricken for a pestilence, dismay'd —  
Not as by Fate, but for our human fault —  
At the times' prospect ? Did not Pheidias  
(If not for tyranny, yet as for godhood,  
Ah ! Zeus-apologist of Aischylos !)  
Suffer dishonor from Athena's folk ?  
I have seen Perikles dismay'd in death  
And Pheidias dishonor'd : but myself  
(Nay, note the irony : myself the Fate !)  
Have never known a failure, not till now !  
Scarce or in soul or skena have I fail'd —  
Till now by sympathy ? Though all men else,  
The princely Perikles or Pheidias  
My perfect peer alike (ah, irony !),  
Attempt some way too much, are broken by it :  
I nowise ! Were my way indeed the best ?  
Or faileth not the gnomus where I fail  
By sympathy unwonted, proving so much  
Of meaning to our life that none should be  
Of golden mediocrity who live ?  
Was not I dead until this moment's mood

## SOPHOCLES

Of sympathy too much revivifying  
For calm of artistry within my soul  
The over-zeal, the over-weakness, yet  
The peerless manhood of my manhood's friends,  
Perikles, Pheidias (e'en Euripides ?),  
Worthy of loftiest poetry and pose  
Upon our skena as I know to-day ?  
Combine the Zeus-defensive with the man  
Weltering in self-felt weakness : and conceive  
The archetype of more-than-tragedy,  
The ultimatum of our Attic taste ! —  
My way achieved the most : so men must say —  
And self-peace with the accomplishment, 't was true —  
Behold my three-score tragedies, supreme  
In men's opinion over all plays else,  
Perchance ? But at this moment all are nought,  
All, to begin anew still unbegun,  
And I first competent by this too-much  
Which now hath hold on me and shakes my soul  
With wrath and unrest for the failure of  
Perfection, for the perfecting by death  
(Or failure's self ?) of work still useless else,  
For all its mere achievement. To my soul  
Or unto Attika, alone hath worth

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The wonder of men's suffering, the gods'  
Self-justification through a tyranny  
None the less hateful that it richeth life  
To beauty by the very pity of it !

'T is this my pity for that Perikles,  
Mine agony for Athenai, that is more  
Than any self-success : 't is that alone  
Which makes of tragedy the art of truth  
And nature above nature (life of mine,  
By feeling as by insight life of theirs !) ;  
Which makes me great as Aischylos was great  
And this Euripides beyond us both :  
Me great, if only great by Oidipous  
The Sufferer who serveth Attika  
By suffering still our hospitality !  
Me, moved in Kolonus by mine Oidipous,  
Who by too much of failure proves at end  
A best possession of our Attika,  
A blessing and beneficence of Zeus  
Through all our days, maugre the curse and sin  
Of human ignorance and gods' despite ! —  
Ah ! if through failure hitherto by too-much  
Of artistry, too-little poethood

## SOPHOCLES

In me (too-much perfecting ; not enough  
Creation !), yet some day my sweet Kolonos  
May feel bless'd in possession of my bones  
And honor me with sacrifice perchance  
For honoring in rhyme this Oidipous  
Most pitiable human of all men  
Though unheroical ; may honor me  
For the true poethood, for tragedy  
Above, beyond the golden media,  
Teeming with sympathies as now my soul  
(Not as by Fate, but for her human fault —  
As I, being I, must know no Fate for mine !)  
Appropriates failure and in her old-age  
Becomes (as Aischylos', Euripides')  
Herself of tragic meaning, hence of man :  
Achieving more than some prosperity  
Of senile competence : me, Sophokles,  
Somewhat as Oidipous, a truth at last,  
Some gnoma in my person and a force  
To guide, make grow, not pander Attic taste :  
Me, moved in Kolonos by the pity of it !

## PLATO

THE blue sky overarcheth with a sense  
Of space illimitable, self-sustain'd. —  
The blue waves fling awide in the breeze ; sea-birds  
Wheel, hover, dart in the foam with plunge and scream  
Unfetter'd ; and the wings of this swift ship  
Aiginaward from Syrakousai press  
Before this west wind as with inward will  
And purpose : every sight and sound inform'd  
With life-insistence. Yet of me my mind  
Alone is free, this body but a slave  
By tyranny's command ; and in a slave  
Must my mind evermore be buried as  
In some self-sheol ; taking blow by blow  
The temper of obedience, the tone  
Of sequence and subservience ; to be  
As shadow only of the mind of man,  
As tyrant's sycophant ! How far opposed  
Unto my present temper and that tone  
Of proud reliance and a high disdain  
Which brought my downfall : even thus my mind  
Sold into slavery as some prisoner  
By power of circumstance ; that circumstance

## PLATO

Its bondage to the body ! For all things  
Are sycophant, subservient sequently  
To matter's tyranny, the base command  
Of physical passivity ; and seem  
Free but by mind's illusion, active but  
By figure of the fancy. Lo ! these masts  
Are bended of a blast inanimate  
And would not, haply, though indeed they must  
Aiginaward bear on ; and so the sea  
Bursts beneath burden of this bustling breeze ;  
The birds by hard desire of food or lust  
To procreate their kind are driven fro  
And yon pursuing and pursued, not one  
All self-impulsive, but directed all  
Toward outward circumstance ; the sacred sky  
Doubtless were but some element ; as these  
Compell'd — to silence and a stagnancy ?  
Shall I, the slave of Dionysios' sneer,  
Decay to silence and a stagnancy ?

The mind hath seem'd creator of all things,  
Divine by emanation of all truth  
Therefrom — impress'd not as from truth-without —  
Nowise subservient (witness Sokrates

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Sublime in dying!). Yet this slightest change  
Of the body's state from freeman unto slave,  
This incident of Dionysios' frown,  
Shall this corrupt the essence of Idea ?  
(Was Sokrates to such a death compell'd ?)  
How slight an alteration ; when from birth  
Hath body, like the billows or these birds,  
Been driven — whether as by outer force  
Or inward want, what heed ? — through all its days  
A creature of necessity compell'd :  
And therewith even the Reason housed therein.  
How slight a change, how insignificant,  
From free to slave, if body aye be slave !  
Have I, one hour, been freeman and not slave ?  
Is any man then free ? Freeman or slave,  
Can slavery alter then one whit the state  
Of Reason (bar that truth of Sokrates  
The Savior) ? For if man is never free,  
Then slavery, being best knowledge of himself,  
But aids toward freedom. And, if not slave-born  
In virtue of our body-prisonment,  
Then Reason lifts beyond all circumstance  
Compulsive, whether sold a slave or no.  
(And either way is Sokrates proved free

## PLATO

As he devoted body unto death !  
And either way is custody of body —  
'Soe'er custodian of soul — no curse !) —  
I have been somewhat free beyond most men,  
Somewhat more reasoning and therefore moved  
Of high philosophy to seek abroad  
The springs of wisdom in the ways of men.  
By Neilos, in Kyrene have I sought ;  
Elea ; and schools of the Pythagoreans ;  
Completing the best circuit of men's dreams  
To blend in them I had at Megara  
With keen Eukleides since Athenai-time.  
Might I return, within as outwardwise  
A bondman ? Or shall this last voyaging  
Aiginaward achieve what I have sought :  
An insight and a system of the truth ?

Behold ! from those sweet lips of Sokrates  
I first received the love of lofty thought —  
Him, who in all mine earnest dialogues  
Enacts protagonist 'mid many men ;  
Him, symbol of all rationality !  
To him be mine obeisance ! Though the soul  
Seek sight original, his sight leads on !

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

For from his doctrine thus much I imbibed :  
The primacy of Reason ; how no truth  
Is truth but by the mind's conception of it,  
By definition common to its class  
And therefore self-sufficed, immutable,  
Free and eternal, not as one of these.  
His the new gnoma : 'Learn of soul, not world' —  
Despite the physicists. From him the faith :  
Of freedom in the realm of pure Idea.  
And yet, these elder Eleatic schools  
Who look for freedom in some Unity  
And find in Wholeness physical their Law !  
Or they who, Herakleitos-like, have found  
Sanction and satisfaction in the theme  
Of flux and passing on the face of things !  
Found they not somewhat meet unto the mind,  
Somewhat of permanence, self-equity,  
In outward world despite the paradox ?  
Methinks Pythagoras might yield a term,  
Some golden mean between the face of things  
That passeth and the 'establishment of Law ?  
Number hath multiplicity and still  
Permanence, unity of character,  
A certain continence of identity,

## PLATO

Through all mutation. With that thought to guide,  
Might not a way be found to reconcile  
The freedom and the slavery of man ?  
For in the man, as in the number-scheme,  
Are integrality (the freedom of him,  
Well-named the mind — the pride of Sokrates  
Unswervable) and multiplicity,  
This sequent reference to other things  
(That hemlock offer'd to the lips to drink!).  
In man are sameness, then, and otherness  
Strangely united — as, eclectical,  
I seek thus to unite Parmenides  
With him of Ephesos through terms of speech  
Best writ in the book I bought (but now have lost)  
Of Philolaos. Can the problem be  
So simple of solution : that some Soul  
Inheres between the heavens and the earth,  
'Twixt mind and body reconciling them,  
Partaking of them both, yet nowise they ;  
Whose omnipresence and omnipotence  
Is mathematic, Number's very self ?

A mighty bolt to unbar heaven and earth,  
Forsooth ; a business now beyond my brain

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Perturb'd by sense of slavehood's impotency,  
But mightily alluring should some chance  
Exchange this serfdom for the nobler life  
Of citizen and teacher in some court  
Or garden near to Akademos' grove.  
Ah, might I hope some outlook to return  
Homeward redeem'd by bounty of a friend !  
More like, to execution am I haled  
(A parody of Sokrates indeed !)  
Among the Aiginetans hostile to me  
By reason of their quarrel with our State !  
Ah, me ! And yet some insight have I gain'd  
Haply of moment equal unto all  
That learning of the Schools : this sense that man  
Is still both slave and free, and that in world  
(The type of serfdom) as in very mind  
(Our type of freedom) equally inheres  
The dualism and blendeth with them both :  
The mind, by reason of its bodiment,  
Imbued with strange compulsion ; and the world,  
By reason of the primacy of mind,  
Passive beneath some freedom-of-its-own  
Inseparable, nowise not of it.  
And thus is Soul the very problem's self,

## PLATO

The mean and common term contain'd of both  
(Though both have nought in common, nought be-  
tween !)

Matter and spirit, containing equally  
Both horns of world's dilemma : and thus a term  
Not separable nor abstracted from  
The conflict which defines it (Sokrates  
Involved in birth-and-dying ; life and death  
Explain'd through Sokrates !).— And thus were they  
Right, the old physiographers, to test  
The world all ways, that it might yield its truth  
E'en though material ; for in the earth  
Its constitution see we mirror-wise  
The problem of the heavens, the elements  
Which are contain'd of mind inversely shown  
(Flux, change for self ; peace for the space of things)  
To mind's interpretation. As was he  
Right, the great Sokrates, to prove of mind  
The truth direct : the peace of inward self,  
The roil but own'd of otherness perceived  
By sense without. Wherefore am I not wrong  
To seek in soul of the world some scheme that shall  
(As air is intermediate, proportion'd  
Harmonic 'twixt the heavens and the earth)

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Explain the contrast ; show how man is free  
(How Sokrates both lived and died, one Man)  
Though slave, how serfdom never may express  
The psychic habitancy of the spheres  
As my soul soars and is at peace with them  
Through all this turmoil's sad expectancy !

For, lo ! how were a freedom to be found  
In isolation, void of other men  
To meet in equal intercourse of mind  
With mind, each mind thus entering in and  
owning  
As self-like every fresh mentality  
Not as identical conceived, but known  
As other, mutually known, defined ?  
The way of loneliness were ever silence  
And stagnancy, not self-sufficiency  
To any purpose : serfdom, but world's type  
Inverted of such isolation ; I  
Fitly enslaved for seeking such a scheme  
Of vacant chaos as were mere Idea  
Hypostatized but not phenomenal,  
Identical but wholly undefined —  
Interminable ! How were World-Ideas

## PLATO

Aught wonderful or worthy, were not each  
Defined, scarce by some common character  
In concept (quite precluded to the lone  
Idea !) but, best, beyond identity,  
By contrast self-implied through all the world ?  
For otherwise were they but number merely ;  
As world, indifferently were one or nought ;  
Subject to duplication, hence unreal,  
Because still undefined, positionless :  
But now are Number reconciling all  
Perplexity by implication each  
Of unity in multiplicity,  
Of integrality in otherness ;  
And world is not without, but is of mind.—  
Yon blue waves beat and burst because they must ;  
These masts bend, driven, to the piping gale  
And part the waters with a roar and rush  
Of proud prow-impulse ; and the white sea-birds  
Pursue and are pursued. But all because  
Yon blue sky soars not self-illimitable  
(Is not some element apart from these) :  
Serene indeed, but standing upon earth  
Or ocean's wide-encircled founding-flood  
A thing of breath and air, of motion, spirit —

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Itself a spirit as all space is spirit  
Containing and contain'd ; not calculable,  
But valued as of truth : and is as they.  
I am a slave and enter into freedom  
By bondage — a slave — and have achieved a Soul !

## ARISTOTLE

HOW can he teach who faileth to explain  
The method of our learning, how we come  
To know the unknown : an we truly learn ?  
How can he teach who cannot of himself  
Find organon, who groping for the Mind  
Loseth all grasp of soul's experience ?  
How can he yield experience to men ?

Not recollection nor forgetfulness  
Might solve this paradox of Known-Unknown,  
This presence of an universal truth  
In truth not universal, of the God  
In self, the certainty in sensuous things  
As felt despite their doubt and falsity :  
This difficulty of the Master's creed  
Which he might name but never might remove  
By myth — metempsychosis and the dream  
Of *anamnesis*, fable which assumes  
Original possession, someway lost,  
Of truth whose gradual acquirement,  
Of godship whose contingent genesis  
(Alone the problem as the paradox !)

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Alone might be demonstrable. For what proof  
(E'en were the proof to problem pertinent!)  
Were plausible? Where might the man begin  
His immemorability save as  
(God being alone possess'd of truth as whole)  
The very Godhead? And, if very God,  
Then must each consequent remove by birth  
(Each strange escape of warrant ultimate  
From out the actual which alone Is !)  
Be some degeneration, without cause  
Or logic possible, compatible;  
A flaw in the fibre of the Essence' Self,  
A foul decomposition as of death  
(A name, this death, perchance, for all this coil ?)  
Inherent, not to any mortal thing  
But, to the causal Origin of Life!  
And thus of one hand must the Godhead prove  
Self-contradiction, incompatible  
With absolute establishment; whilst yet  
Of the other hand the life of every man,  
Increasing hourly by experience  
In knowledge and in wisdom, contradicts  
The tendence of the Godhead (thus defined  
As stultification), and moreover thwarts

## ARISTOTLE

By mere inevitable cumulance  
Of certainty and insight through the years  
The natural teleology of things ;  
Runs counter to the soul's supremest goal  
Of perfect godship as the crown of life  
(For so this Platon's doctrine needs were crown'd) :  
Such godship (that of self-degenerance  
Inherent) shown beneath the dignity  
Of idiocy, a godship self-deceived  
And worse than worthless if deceiving Man !  
The Master endeth in a Mystery :  
An universe at odds within itself ;  
A primal Cause of self-deintegrance —  
And he, by preassumed self-ignorance, shown  
Unfit to teach who knoweth not to learn ! —  
I well know otherwise ; I feel in me  
A worth of wisdom in experience,  
The value of this sense-accumulation,  
The dignity of life as it is learning  
And not forgetfulness, the insight gather'd  
Aspiring as to God ; and know the God  
A goal of aspiration ; if unmoved  
(Still unattainable), yet not at last  
Devolving and destroying, save as death

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Be parcel of developmental life,  
Wherethrough the individual achieves  
An impulse for the race and class of each  
Onward and Godward! — How shall these truths be?

A motion and a Cause ; the creature moved  
And the Creator —if the phrase be so.  
An immanence of universalness  
Conative, self-recognizant in act,  
A system of accumulance impress'd  
As in a mould ; a force defining self  
Substantialwise ; a matter and a form.  
These, the essentials ; and the rest obtains.  
I touch and test the world of men and things,  
Finding one substance to the touch and test,  
An opposition, self-negation of  
All impulse, a passivity excluding  
(Particularity of judgment-mode)  
Its own mere part-displacement under stress,  
A space-impassive none the less compell'd :  
For creature-moment ; and I call the thing  
Matter, as meaning elemental rest,  
The moved and dead-created, uncreate,  
Immobile in itself — nay, that which hath

## ARISTOTLE

As 't were no selfhood, is not in itself.  
I touch and test the world of self within,  
Finding a test, but not a substance here  
To touch: an action of appropriance  
(The generality of truth-adjudged),  
Hardly of opposition though containing  
All self-distinction, part within the part.  
This that I find I call the mind of me  
(Experiential ; never as in dream  
Disjunct from world, self-segregate from things ;  
But registrant and nowise self-innate) ;  
Made universal as the world of mind,  
The self-impressive, that which makes the test  
As register'd and testing registrates ;  
Which is creator of distinctiveness  
As though internal through the vague extern  
Of segregative substance, binding it  
To self-relationship and unity ;  
And thus is mould, or still more subtly Form,  
The final motive. Thus the riddle reads.  
Now, to the theme of world-development  
(Consonant with the growth of me by thought  
Or act-participation in affairs  
From day to day) must a new proof adhere

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of tendency, self-teleology  
In mutualization of the duplex stuffs  
(Abstractly so defined as I 've defined them  
Each aspect severally); for these must still  
Constitute interplay ; and otherwise  
Were no duplicity but separate worlds  
Unthinkable, preposterous to proof.  
Therefore must be for further postulate  
The innate yearning of the primal vague  
Toward truth-distinctiveness as in a sort  
Appropriate thereto, a property  
(Degenerative of degenerance' self,  
Preclusive of inertia in the inert !)  
Even of passivity as actualized ;  
And on the counter hand the zeal of mind  
To transcend and sublate with proof of form  
(And thus achieve itself !) material fact :  
The term of mind actualized so and taken  
For mutual-matter's goal-finality.  
Likewise the inward latency of things  
Toward declaration—not as though some void  
Were gradual fill'd of substance less or more  
Compact-diffuse; but as though form and substance  
Were self-processive, were by nature nought

## ARISTOTLE

Than mutuality, whose proof and sign  
Is Time, the passing of the days and years.  
Nor might a logic of analysis  
(Such as were practical to be put forth,  
On basis of the Platonism here,  
To counteract the Master's mere mistakes  
Of extra-worldliness, and yet to be  
Readily understood of the schools),  
A classification of our genera  
And species, an epistemology  
Of type as perfect object (as I fear  
My doctrine will adumbrate, implicate  
As men will half-mistake it !) quite attain  
A method-organon of such a scheme  
Of cumulance and temporality,  
In mutualizing of each element  
By definition through all substance else.  
Substance unmutual were stuff of space,  
'T is true, demarcable and alterable  
Partitive-wise, abstract each part from part  
And strictly self-contain'd in every part  
Without a reference to aught extern —  
Such stuff were well demonstrab'le by rule  
Of contradiction and a common term

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

For consubstantiation ; and indeed  
Were such a logic-system Platon's surely,  
Conformable to and explicable of  
The pure Idea. But such should not be my  
Doctrine of knowledge ; for my creed should be  
More adequate to a knowledge entering in  
As mind-term of the world-hypothesis  
Developmental, cumulant — whereof,  
Despite all ignorance, might no term be  
Itself unknown in present actualness ;  
Such membership in knowledge rightly achieved,  
Not by community with outer fact  
(Mergence impossible) but, by reference  
To somewhat (selfhood with the object of it)  
Both gone before and coming after ; each term  
Itself present in time but nowise one  
With what it cannot be, the yesterday  
Nor the to-morrow ; but each day of days  
Defining and referring in itself  
To all-time ; thus eternal ; thus self-known  
By self-distinctiveness ; thus generalized,  
Self-absolute as every Truth must be !  
And thus alone were knowledge possible  
As universal in the temporal scheme ;

## ARISTOTLE

And thus alone were logic actual  
Because contain'd of cumulative life  
Processive, self-achieving as toward God !

'T were plausible! And note how opens out  
The field of travail to philosophy:  
No longer blind to every fact of earth  
With faith but focuss'd on the farthest stars,  
But finding in the daily strife o' the world  
The dear domain of absolute idea,  
Of form the truth-constructor, not beyond  
World wholly (for, were form beyond the world,  
Were form but shown inane and actionless  
In isolation of a pseudo-truth  
Call'd mathematic, number) but, itself  
The mind, self-comprehension of things all.  
So, to the field of travail ! that this earth  
Be catalogued ; and categorical  
Analysis — not sheerly part from part,  
But mutualwise with generality  
Specifical in contrast self-contain'd  
Of each itself — declare of each the frame  
And genesis, its coming unto truth. —  
Granted that all shall pass and grow anew

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

To stricter frame, more self-disposed to achieve  
Economy of action purposeful ;  
Granted that teleology propose  
Invention now undream'd : and therefore these  
Now extant modern instances of truth  
Wax obsolete : shall that deter one whit  
The wonder of the instant truth-survey,  
The sure investigation here and now  
Whereof each item of real genesis  
(Nowise explaining away the now-complex !)  
Shall postulate and indicate to men  
The doctrine of the vital latency,  
The potency of matter and the zeal  
Energetic of the world-updrawing mind  
Godward developing through all her days ?  
The cause efficient as the genesis :  
And then beyond, beneath and still within,  
The God-cause final, the perfected Form  
So far as may be meant of mortal mind  
Working within these days and in these ways  
That man may work in as the world is young.  
And, young or old, some knowledge step by step  
Sure in the doctrine and the world-idea,  
The formative pure process and the proof

## ARISTOTLE

By teleology, the yearning-toward  
Inherent and insistent ! — At the worst  
'T were plausible, though still the rift remain  
And riddle of an universe at odds !  
Though still the self-dilemma needs inhere :  
Of Learning in the stead of Ready-Known,  
Of genesis in place of plethora !  
Though all be problem still, 't were plausible !  
Why trouble, then, further with the riddle of it,  
When at the worst my world is onwardly  
A self-correction, not a chaos-come ?  
My logic stands sufficient to the times,  
Their need to dis-god Platon and design  
An organon of high acquirement  
By truth transmissible, so teachable,  
Not block'd by body's bad forgetfulness,  
But plain appreciable as here and now  
Complete, didactically finitive :  
Wanting but souls to seize it ! Oh, for some  
King-born disciple, one who might, by strength  
Of this world-knowledge, as he conquer'd earth,  
Rule well, self-cognizant of law and rule  
Within him as within the world he ruled ;  
Some pliant prince, receptive to the mould

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(Philippos' child, the Makedonian's,  
My father's patron's grandson, should be he ?)  
Of this my masterful impressive mind  
As matter to the Form—I unto him  
Master and God-cause final ; he to me  
The latency, the striving. That my labor  
Be not lost, but my name be known in him  
(No name of race nor class nor kind, but my name !),  
An universe of practice, though my theme  
Be theoretic and my deeds be nought.—  
The Master of these Akademos-groves  
Hath miss'd the meaning, is as one apart,  
For all his vast discipleship here shown.  
He is a truth, but weak within the world  
Because of isolation, disregard  
Of the body of the world, its genuine zeal  
Toward self-salvation and accumulance  
Of truth experiential in the form  
Impressible by men 'mongst other men,  
By mind 'mongst other minds projectible  
Each upon others pedagogically—  
And by such only. For were truth apart,  
A theme but of these Akademic groves,  
Then were no knowledge possible, unless

## ARISTOTLE

We dream'd and have forgotten and at best  
May bitterly remember as we die  
The old lost Godhood self-deintegrant.  
But I, I grow by inward genesis  
Of truth in every instant ; and start forth  
A Teacher ; and shall teach unto some man  
(Whether or no Demosthenes denounce !)  
The secret of the governance of earth :  
And, unto ages, truth grown of my truth !

## ASOKA

BEHOLD these my decrees, on steles set  
Plain, in the portions of mine empire  
Triune, in North and East and West alike  
Proclaiming dominance of my true creed,  
The cult of Him the Buddha, Blessèd One ! —  
How hold my diverse empire in hand  
As wholly mine and mighty, save by such  
Dominance of some spiritual truth  
Potent to seize upon men's many minds  
And so subdue them to subservience,  
Leaving my mind lifted on high alone  
Above their poor desires and feebler will ;  
My will and my desire alone of strength  
To overcome sedition, stamp all sign  
Of treason from beneath me, and be sure :  
Asoka, I, supreme, imperial ?

Asoka, I, supreme, imperial,  
Founding my power on the Buddha's word !  
What creed so clearly might consolidate  
Imperial power, as this of quietism,  
Some somnolent non-assertion of men's wills

## ASOKA

Against mine in the world, their hope at last  
For innermost non-essence, slow attain'd  
Through many lives of meekness more and more ?  
Through many lives of weakness : I alone  
Strong, unencumber'd of the creed imposed !  
These priests of Brahma (whom I nowise hurt  
Now they are harmless !) had made sorry slaves  
With their pretensions to authority  
And spiritual power over men  
By ceremonial observances  
And sacrifices to propitiate  
A pandemonium of deities  
Conceived above all power imperial !  
How had I wasted life in truckling to them,  
Cajoling, flattering ; and been weaken'd by it  
In every hour of my governing !  
How had I been their puppet, just a show  
Of kinghood : but for these few cataclysms  
Happily now perform'd upon their heads  
Which rid me of their menace. Whereupon  
In gratitude to Gautama, behold  
These steles of an universal peace  
Proclaiming quietism ; to all men  
Self-abnegation, and at last reward

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(Scarcely by grace of any deity),  
For non-resistance, in a nothingness :  
Myself alone remaining as some god ;  
Asoka, I, supreme, imperial !  
May I, the king, attain no Buddhahood !

What worthy system were there of a world  
Without some dominant superior  
To order and devise, plan and proclaim,  
Determining the Path, making the Law  
Unto the diverse disagreements of  
The dull and wrangling peoples ? What were well  
Were it not for the wisdom of some man  
Eminent, understanding, capable  
Even to compel obedience overtly  
And with authority overawe the heart  
And mind unto subservient content ?  
These priests of Brahma were a wiser folk  
Than any mendicant ; and e'en within  
This Order of the Law (in monastery  
As through novitiate), the Law prevails  
As Gautama devised it, and the Law  
Needs, both, and finds preceptors wise enough  
(Though by their vow not menacing to me !)

## ASOKA

To discipline, chastise, enforce, and seem  
Authoritative to the time and place.  
How doth this plain necessity for power  
And for obedience run through all our ways  
Of earth and men, preventing quietism  
Absolute, abrogating emptinesses  
Of will and purpose, proving each of us  
Incapable of nothingness, each man  
Imperial in a sort, someway supreme  
In the mere life-assertion every day  
Of breath and being. And the greatest man  
Is the most dominant ; the happiest  
He who proclaims and can enforce decrees  
On the recalcitrant. These Brahmin priests  
Were greater than their fellows ; that they fell  
Because a greater was among them, I—  
I, though low-born of caste, by strength of heart  
Brahmin indeed of Brahmins, greatest of them,  
Asoka, king, supreme, imperial !

Ah, but a greater was upon the earth :  
Gautama, the Enlighten'd, Blessèd One,  
He whom I reverence, who without decree  
Or force of cataclysm, nor by aid

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of any power material could compel  
All men to yield unto His purposes  
And be subservient unendingly !  
Even Asoka, in defying Him  
Who counsell'd uttermost humility,  
Hath bow'd unto His power and become  
His slave, Asoka who establisheth  
Himself supreme, imperial but by strength  
Of Buddha's Law within the kingly mind :  
Imperial disciple ! Would that I  
Knew but the secret of His prevalence,  
To rule without decree, command by strength  
Of prescience inborn ; and be, as He,  
Buddha ; in mine own person, as a creed !

## PAUL

A MURMUR is of many men around  
Unfriendly (as at Thessalonica and  
Philippi) — God be unto me a shield  
And strength ; for I shall need Him when I stand  
High there on Areopagus. The Jews  
Hate, when they dare indulge their hearts to hate,  
Even with the hate of hounds and wolves (I, once,  
A Grecian Jew : twice venomized !) ; the Greeks  
Shriek shriller than the Jews, but at the worst  
Hate Jew worse than this Jesus of my word.  
(Perchance their hatred of myself as Jew  
Will melt in mockery when I come to speak  
Of truths un-Jewish and a novelty ?)  
That thus will God help, guard, if not by peace  
And goodwill among men, at least by strife  
Of Greek 'gainst Hebrew, shielding Christ and me—  
A Roman citizen as they may know —  
Beyond the fear of harm. I less should fear  
Were mine affliction not upon mine eyes :  
That so I see not clearly, but as darkling  
Perceive these scowling faces in the throng  
So close about. But I will swell my thought

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

With inward vision and beyond their frowns  
Draw wisdom with courage from the Source of both,  
Dispelling hesitancy.—I will mount  
Mars' Hill and speak unto the Stoics thence,  
The Epicureans and idolaters.

Athens below me as I dimly climb,  
All Greece, a different nation, other minds  
Than Antioch, than Salamis, despite  
That Hellenism of the Syrian shores—  
For was not I a Jew though Hellenist;  
Although Cilician, mystic at the heart?  
These are not mystics at the heart (for all  
That altar to the Unknown God I spell'd  
Below in Agora!), but men of sense  
(For so, in the moment's need, their viewpoint seems  
More rational than formerly—than mine?)  
Desirous of an understanding mind,  
As I in private converse have discern'd,  
Beyond mere superstition.—How to meet  
Need of the moment by the word of God?  
How render unto Pericles (for much  
Of Athens' history I late have learn'd,  
Her rulers and philosophers) in speech

## PAUL

The things of Pericles, when my truths be  
The things of God ? — And yet I feel that God  
Is logical — as Greece is logos-wise ;  
Is practical — as I am practical :  
Apostle laboring, accomplishing  
By argument unto the moment's need —  
I something of the demagogue at soul,  
Half-Alcibiades, Demosthenes,  
If also Plato at the core of me !  
And therefore is no blasphemy at worst,  
But verily the best mere man may do  
(Whilst combating their soulless Aristotle,  
To waive that worth of Plato they would scorn)  
If God be made a purpose practical  
(The things of Pericles made God's thereby !)  
Unto the reason, practised argument  
And sophistry that fills this people here.  
No doubt a later age may find in him,  
The Stagirite, much inference of a Mind  
Somewhat omnipotent, creative, which  
Folk shall confuse with Him I 'd now proclaim.  
Doubtless the peaceful Platonism in me  
Of reservation beyond earthly strife,  
Of resurrection, what-not after death,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Shall color as with a jargon of the schools  
My dogma of the God who, also Man,  
Concludeth all, yet scarce is very world :  
Himself a part of it whilst still the whole.  
Yet now I feel me toward the Stagirite  
Hostile who teacheth isolation, mind  
From mind, without a resolution through  
Any divinity inherent in us  
As we are men material here and now,  
Any communion as of charity  
Which maketh universals, each in each,  
By insight and by sympathy, not by  
Analysis of common characters  
As in the scheme abstractive taught of him.  
Plato were more my creed, in truth, save he, too,  
Suffer interpretation misconceived  
(As now these men of Athens would construe  
Amiss the mystery !) of God but name  
For generality abstract and lost  
In ether of the spheres, as are their gods —  
Leaving poor man alone and earth alone  
Disintegrant as in their Stoicism.  
Thus, in default of either of their wisest  
(Opposing Aristotle's soullessness

## PAUL

Of earth, and God beyond real earth or man ;  
Avoiding Plato's generality  
Of world-salvation through the archetype  
Beyond real reason ; though affirming through  
Christ the creed's universal applicance),  
So must I make God very practical,  
Complaisant to the motive of their mind,  
Its pseudo-wisdom and its old despair !

What was their utmost wisdom ? 'Know thyself' !  
And what the outcome of much earnest search  
Unguided of the Christ ? Just this at last :  
'The self is atom, item each alone,  
'Indifferently to the wider world  
'Of other selves sustaining each its fate—  
'Body or spirit, Stoic either way ;  
'Epicurean severally, though soul—  
'Imposed by all-soul of the universe  
'As from without. The names we give the gods  
'Are but a man's emotions clothed with false  
'Impersonation in the void of things.'  
There the scheme ends and fails ; the gnosticism,  
The boasted system of these men of sense,  
Turns to the nature of that God Unknown

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(The atom, else the generality ;  
Zero or void — who can determine which ? —  
All else intended of Democritus,  
Zeno, Parmenides, or Socrates !) —  
The Known, the Self, because, though miscall'd spirit,  
Regarded as the body (earth, as truth  
All-unregenerate by the syllogism  
Which proves earth false, impossible to proof  
Unless divine in essence !), mere mine or thine ;  
A Christ's that might have died to rise no more ;  
The unity assumed : nothing of God ;  
And thus God-nature, nothing ! — Can a man,  
With such as these to hear and be made convert  
(Keen disputants imbued of paradox,  
Glorying in contradiction if but clean-cut),  
How'er he truly scorn their paradox  
Of thee and me ununion'd of a God,  
Talk mystic doctrine ; or hath mystery  
Been long ago to logic-chopping tongues  
Emptied of any than a barren fame ?  
Were that a service unto God, to speak  
Mere esoteric unity-through-Christ  
(As through some All, failing the truth of Self !) —  
Vicarious, for all our faith in it —

## PAUL

As I have elsewhere taught it, when to them  
'T would seem so stale an outcome, just a myth  
At best of Delphi or Eleusis there ?  
Ah, rather, take Christ as the type of each  
Successful in the knowledge of Himself  
And only therefore centrally of God  
And, as God, savior to the race of men !  
God is the unity their wisdom lacks,  
'T is true (acceptance of the Self in all  
It knows or feels or hath its being in :  
Self, therefore world-sustainer, Christ or each !) —  
'T is true ; nought truer, than God's inmost truth.  
Yet what were God or Christ, were Christ or God  
Not yet of self, nothing of self's own world,  
Unknown as were the fabled Pythian ? —  
It is an instance, then, to lay aside  
All mystery and thus to serve best God  
By making very self-like Him we seek —  
Method of Socrates ; though not, as that one  
By isolative world-analysis  
And negative demarcation, proving self  
Or God alike but that which truth is not !  
For fact at last is still the truth we seek,  
Still subject of salvation, I or thou

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Saved but by proof that each is yet his world  
And therefore universal and the God.  
It is an instance, then, of 'Know Thyself',  
The God Thou art, not as a myth outworn  
Of hyperhumans, powers impossible  
At war and lust within the world (still less  
Without the world, by Platonism!) — but just  
Knowledge, the world as faith self-makes it, shown  
Contain'd within the life of each of men  
So far as wisdom is the life of him  
And holds the world concluded of his strength.

With this, the truth I see within, I mount  
Fearless and foeless to the speaking-place  
(Their frowns, as not when Socrates stood here,  
Melted to semblance of some courtesy),  
My speech determined in unwonted guise  
To meet this moment : not the Unknown God  
Their superstition and idolatry  
(For so I see their sense, by loftier sense  
Of understanding contravening theirs !),  
'Wilder'd by logic of the Stagirite  
Or dream of Plato, hath reduced to nought ;  
Such as I preach'd, through Christ's authority

## PAUL

And mystical identity, before  
At Antioch or Salamis ; and such  
As, if without unreasoning faith in Christ,  
Mere negative analysis must rest in,  
If Christ be vicar and not type of each  
Self-savior universalized : but now  
(For 't is my second calling, first to faith  
In blindness, now to wisdom inwardly —  
Mine eyes' affliction serving in good stead !)  
Without least blasphemy, most practical ;  
(Demagogue I, most suited to the time  
And place, so thus most serviceable) : the God  
Of Knowledge, universal world of each —  
Prosper'd, made godly most, by knowledge of it ! —  
They question me, asking to hear my truth. —

“ Ye men of Athens, hear me while I speak  
“ The God ye ignorantly worship : God ! ”

## PETER

NOW is the hour of failure of my life,  
The sinking of the star within my soul  
Which hitherto hath led me and sustain'd  
Through divers tribulations since that night  
Accursèd when I did deny Him thrice.  
Since that dark hour of Jesus' earthly death  
Hath Christ in me, the risen Spirit of God,  
Upheld and temper'd with a living strength  
Of infinite salvation : a commission,  
By overflow beyond my need alone,  
To be Apostle, Christ's evangelist  
Unto the saving of the souls of men.  
Till now, hath Christ been power in me ; but now  
I fail, am swoon'd in spirit, am as though  
Christ had not risen from the dead, but lay  
Still in the tomb as I so fear to lie.  
I am grown old so very suddenly ;  
My limbs half-palsied with the stricken heart  
In panic at the last. The last is come ;  
And I, with what of palsied, frenzied speed  
Remains, am fleeing like a thief in the night  
From Rome, from Nero and a martyr's crown.

## PETER

I am unworthy of a martyr's crown.  
I flee from glory : utterly unfit.

The congregation hath for many days  
(Such Sheep as Cæsar's savagery hath spared)  
In secret meeting-places pray'd of me  
To make departure, in the name of Christ  
(As Christ permitted to our finitude)  
Preserving from the persecution this  
Enfeebled body, sorrow-stricken head,  
For new apostlehood in fairer fields  
And less distressful days. I did resist,  
Knowing the cowardice their words awoke  
Within me, feeling that escape was worse  
Than any bodily death. But now I yield me  
Unto temptation irresistible,  
Stamped by my fear ; and mask that fear  
In resignation to the call of God  
Afar, who dwells no longer in myself  
As erst ! — Could Christ Himself, might He appear,  
Condemn my soul more utterly than I ?  
My limbs swing quavering onward ; but my soul,  
Abject before the judgment-bar of Christ,  
Resists itself ; would turn upon this path

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Back to Gehenna were it yawning for me —  
Save that my soul, not yet so shameless-lost,  
Acknowledges no right to martyrdom.  
And therefore must shamefacedly away.

Yet, were it not some subtler torment still  
Of terror, self-disguised, which I detect  
In this self-condemnation barring me  
From best nobility ? The bodily fear,  
Welcomes it not the abnegation, but  
Because the self-distrust is easier,  
The abrogation of all heavenly hope  
Evades the calling to the cruel cross ?  
Deem'd Christ not (knowing every thought of man)  
Me worthy, as poor sinful men are found  
Faltering and repenting every hour,  
To be His conservator upon earth,  
Holder of mystic keys to ope the door  
Of earth to heaven ; and call'd me by the name  
Cephas, the rock-foundation of the faith ?  
Foresaw He not these dregs of sin in me,  
This fainting of the body ? Yet said He not :  
The soul is willing though the flesh be weak —  
And therefore not unworthy though it sleep

## PETER

As slept it there in His Gethsemane ?  
I know so surely what Christ's self would do.  
He would be hastening from the ends of earth  
(Could but one soul be saved for God thereby)  
Toward crucifixion here the second time !  
Perchance Christ hasteth now to save my soul  
Out of the dismal slumber of this night ! —  
Awake, my soul ! Methinks there doth appear,  
Like to quick gleams of dawn athwart the way  
(The hour of dawn is come and cocks do crow  
As once in far-off sad Jerusalem !),  
The spirit of Jesus ! Those, His hands ; and that,  
His white-robed person as from that first tomb  
It rose with angels o'er the sepulchre —  
I saw it not, but feel it was as now !  
And, there, that burst of morning-shine upon  
The mist of this low country, beams His face :  
Belovèd features seen as long ago,  
Though never latterly. And these His feet  
Are stirring in the radiant risen dust !

It is the morning and the night is past.  
The day hath purpose of evangel still. —  
Master ! I turn. I know Thou wilt forgive.

## CONSTANTINE

A CREDIBLE wonder ! ‘ In the sign of the cross,  
‘ Lo ! thou shalt conquer ! ’ — And destroy I did  
Mine enemy. And all that appertain’d  
Unto his power hath fallen mine appanage.  
And I am Imperator unopposed.

I am inclined unto the way of Christ  
Without such intervention, knowing well  
The fruit of victory were best a peace,  
The source of peace best found within the soul,  
And the soul best at peace within her world  
When loving most (love, but a sympathy  
Of world-control — as I, being unopposed,  
Am fain to love !) beyond the body’s bounds.  
Therefore I would not be myself the God  
And worshipp’d of the nations as were needs  
The cult did I declare for idol-Rome  
Her priests and deities ; for so myself,  
Being above humanity, were then  
Incapable of sympathy, perverse  
In every action and impolitic,  
Blind to the signs of the times (this cross, the chief !),

## CONSTANTINE

Regardless of all rights or righteousnesses  
Beyond my person proven in itself  
Alone invaluable ; and my soul  
Were thus confined to dwell within my breast,  
Nor could expand with zeal beneficent.  
Nor do the reasons of best politic  
Longer allow a God Imperial  
Where now so clear majority of men  
Decline the worship, are recalcitrant  
Even in face of Diocletian's beasts ;  
And plain rebellious where 't were folly quite  
Wantonly to provoke with such demand.  
Nor would I be the Stoic, shut within  
The circuit of his breast, whose idleness  
Of dull indifference vainly would deny  
All vital interest in men's affairs.  
How be as old Aurelius meditating  
Conduct of life as though the life of the world  
Were wholly alien (whilst under his hand  
Men shook and suffer'd !), when unto mine hand  
Are peoples teeming, and the power of well  
Or ill within the hollow of my palm,  
And daily everything to judge and do  
Pertaining to the conduct of the world

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

As 't were my life, as I must feel for it  
And judge for it and wield it as 't were mine ?  
Or how indulge in dream Philonian —  
Platonic, Hermetic, Saccan, who may care ? —  
Of æon-emanation and exile  
(In mystification-subtlety) of God  
From world and world from life, sith all within  
The soul is held but as some gnosis-scheme  
Of Logos-wrought construction, nothing like  
(Nor did Plotinus scare the ghost away,  
For all his intermediacy of worlds !)  
A life where all is opportunity  
And all is opportune unto the soul  
(That takes the trick of opportunity !)  
To see and feel the life of thousand souls  
As one, by sympathy to move and sway  
All purposes and passions to mine own ;  
And thus, by playing the god within the world  
Whilst still man, learn the truth of God-within,  
Not God-beyond, the system of earth-things —  
For thus, I deem, doth Hosius seem to teach,  
Seeking to turn me to the ways of Christ —  
Of Christ, Himself the system, that He be  
In guise a man, unworshipp'd, spat upon

## CONSTANTINE

And crucified even because His soul  
Was great beyond the body, and therethrough  
(As may mine in my plenitude of power !)  
Did feel and sympathize with life of men !  
Such, God should be — a God beyond myself  
(Would I be Christ, to suffer as the God,  
When power with sympathy pertains to kings ?)  
And yet within the working of the world :  
And thus within myself that I shall wield  
Power by fostering, not by opposing,  
('Ware yet to him who sole opposed my mood !)  
The prevalent purposes of many men  
Made thereby loyal subjects.— What care I  
For heresy, for this new Arius' creed  
(One hears fresh-rumor'd through the scandal'd  
West  
Out of the East of thousand fantasies !)  
Concerning Godhood's man-embodiment,  
Its unity or difference in God —  
When plain I see the purpose through all creeds  
Toward world-religion fit for private life  
Since seated in the soul of all alike  
Who find God in the sympathy with all  
Honest opinion ! — Whence I shall announce —

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

When the due time come, and Licinius,  
This Eastern half-Augustus who remains  
'Twixt me and absolute power, shall in turn  
Be ruin'd, and I have leisure then to love  
In way of Christ as Hosius would approve it!—  
Conversion of the State as of myself  
Unto the Christian teaching : scarce to crush  
The Stoic or the Mystic—let them dream  
Along their ways of life, which shall be safe  
(Save if by men's insistent loud demand  
Their persecution should prove politic ?)  
Within my bounds of empire ; for they lack  
The worldhood as the Godhood ; and shall pass  
Without mine intervention.. And within  
The Christian covenant shall every soul—  
So long as he be quiet citizen —  
Enjoy respect unto his private creed :  
Save only, should majority demand,  
(Surely, for reasons of a quiet State)  
I well might silence him call'd Arius,  
Else him who may oppose him — who may care ?

Then let the plausible miracle have sway  
Sufficient to enforce within my heart

## CONSTANTINE

Soul's natural propensity, give excuse  
For politic conversion to the creed  
Which seems to bode prosperity and peace  
With power by insight of the hearts of men.  
Unfold the Labarum above the host !  
‘ In this sign shalt thou conquer ’ — credibly !

## ATHANASIUS

MYSELF against the world! — that here I stand  
(Though courteous, Cæsar's chill magnificence)  
Exiled, alone among the Treviri !  
Nay, worse, Nicæa's declaration quite  
Betray'd of men ; that I of all alone  
Uphold the truth ; and every man beside  
Of all who dare lift voice and make belief  
Effective, felt within the ways of life,  
Cleave to that Arian error, how our Christ  
Were demi-god, not God essentially !  
Christ, and is this the working of Thy Word  
That Thou shouldst be betray'd a second time ?

Christ, and, alas ! this momentary doubt  
Of my poor self against the whole wide world :  
The doubt of my clear vision ! Would Thy care  
E'er have committed truth to me alone ?  
Is it the loneliness, whilst sick at heart  
I mourn in this cold boreal clime our sun  
And sweetness of the Alexandrian air,  
That all-congeals the passion of my soul

## ATHANASIUS

To mist and dimness and the ice of doubt,  
Deadening faith ? Or doth Thy spirit at last  
Desert Thine instrument of Providence,  
Leaving me naked, inspirationless,  
Defeated and acknowledged desolate,  
Myself in error ; and mine enemies  
(I fancied Thine) but mine triumphantly  
Because within Thy will inscrutable  
Chosen truth-messengers mysteriously ?  
All were as dark, O Christ, if truth were so.  
For me, I could not see, being in wrong ;  
I could not understand this being in wrong  
Because mine error's fault would blind the soul.  
But either way must I have faith in Thee  
For utter Godhead, being by Thy will  
Born as I am to this belief in Thee.  
And, right or wrong, must speak Thy gospel still,  
Whether by plenitude of inward light  
Thy servant, or by plenitude of sin  
Thine anti-Christ self-blinded of the void !  
Man scarce may know whether the will be free  
Or fated of Thy Providence ; but this  
Too bitterly I know, that, right or wrong,  
Man is but blind unless by grace of Thee

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

His blindness proveth wisdom. But Thy grace  
Extendeth not to me. And lost am I.

Am not I lost because I never knew  
The grace of moderation, realizing  
Not this dilemma of the blinded flesh ?  
That I but stand more fervently confirm'd  
(By self-deceit, so be it by Thy will ?)  
In hatred of that half-god humanhood  
Their creeds would foist upon Thee (being assured  
By creature-blindness in this human soul —  
Christ save the contradiction ! — Thou couldst ne'er  
Be any compound of humanity  
As such with God ; but that Thy manhood were  
The Godhead through and through and so self-  
known !) —  
That I may never waver in belief  
(To fall, if fall I must, in self-despite),  
Preventeth not this keen soul-scrutiny  
Which sheweth other minds as self-deceived  
Doubtless, at best as wholly self-unknown,  
Dependent on Thy grace for right belief,  
As I ; and therefore worth, none less than I,  
The pity and charity wherewith Thy mind

## ATHANASIUS

Must ever regard this mole-like mind of man.  
To what end Thou might'st misinform Thy seed  
(Nay, rather, permit man's own perversity  
Some want of Thy correction) scarce were theme  
For any mind of man e'er to admit  
Unto his ignorance. Though this at least  
Is sure, that now in ignorance self-known  
Mine ignorance uprears regenerate ;  
Now for the first truly acclaiming Thee !  
Now for the first truly a man of God,  
A man God-like as Thou art God made Man.  
Thine, Christ, the Gnosis ; ours, the Ignorance :  
Alike in self-acceptance. And, since man  
Hath thereby knowledge of his ignorance,  
Are we, as Thou in Arius' half-creed,  
Each demi-god ; and Arius were right  
If but with our humanity concern'd ;  
Each man, some incarnation of Thy truth,  
Divine because self-seen in ignorance ;  
Yet human sheerly. And myself were wrong,  
Who fancied Thy Christ-incarnation other  
Than thuswise human wholly in that Thou  
Wast cognizant of being still divine ! —  
What further subtlety were plausible

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Beyond such understanding, by Thy grace,  
As this vouchsafed ? How longer make dispute  
Concerning Thy humanity's degree  
Of Godhood or of humanhood, where both  
Alike are property incorporate  
Of every man ? 'T were but that we, being flesh,  
Achieve this Godhood of self-cognizance,  
Acknowledgment unto ourselves (by grace  
Of Thee) of this our ignorance inborn ;  
Whereas Thy Godhood, for the sins of the world  
In ignorance conceived, didst take upon Thee  
The partiality of innocence ;  
That, by the spectacle of innocence  
Godly in perfect self-acknowledgment,  
Might men discover in themselves the seed  
Of Thy divinity — as I to-day.  
What further subtlety were possible ?  
Yet, Christ, perchance, in these cool boreal lands —  
Who knows ? — where passion warps not, but the  
sight  
Within were at the acme, and the man,  
Imbued with confidence of innocence,  
In natural exaltation might assume  
World-comprehension quite without Thy grace —

## ATHANASIUS

A comprehension wantonly supposed  
Of wisdom, not of selfish ignorance —  
To such a man might not this doctrine seem,  
To-day which I inherit and achieve,  
Some warrant to degrade in parity  
Thy manhood to my manhood, thus to mock  
Thee with assumption of a full divine  
For man, as Thou assumedst humanity ?  
Pardon the wanton word ! Yon Arius  
Degradeth Thee not as would such a man  
(And till this hour had I but been as he  
In crass self-confidence — though spared his  
folly !)  
By such apotheosis of his kind !  
For within such an arrogance might no law  
(For no humility would look for it !)  
Of logic countervene still to maintain  
Distinction intervening as reveal'd  
Between Thee and Thy people ne'ertheless.

Therefore, O Lord, unto Thy revelation  
I still appeal against this Arian world,  
Not unto logic ratiocinant  
Nor unto grace of comprehension ; but

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

To faith in revelation ! That alone  
(Ay, plain I feel it in this moment's need)  
Can save our ignorance from claim at last  
To perfect parity with truth of Thee  
And with Thy wisdom, Godhood.— Thus, O  
Christ,  
Alone in Treviri my soul appeals  
Not more to argument which leads too far  
For safety of poor human ignorance  
(Scarce to a Cæsar, seem he ne'er so kind !)  
But, to transfiguration : Christ reveal'd —  
Thy revelation, against Arius !

## AUGUSTINE

IT is not that I too well knew the sweets  
Of the old false way (he my natural son  
Adeodatus was some proof of them !);  
But rather that this tumult at the walls,  
This thunder of the Vandal horde's attack,  
Hath meaning and prejgment of a new  
Wise order founded in the way of Christ  
As over against the way of heathen gods  
Which we, though followers and folk of Christ,  
Must represent and still uphold in the breach  
Against God's Genseric ! I little heed  
(Though in itself his error kill the soul !)  
That he profess — for thus the rumor runs —  
Fiercely that heresy of Arius  
The anomœan — as I still less heed  
That I, the staunch supporter of the truth,  
Held mysteries Manichæan in those days  
Of youth-perversity and carnal lust.

For none less I stand representative  
Of Rome imperial, the Christless State,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The City not of God though Christ's in name.  
And he no less, though nominally none  
Of Christian principle, denying Christ's  
Incarnate Godhood by declaring Him  
Created if divine — he, Genseric,  
But battles in the cause of order new,  
Destroying that the Lord may build again  
On a clean field when we unworthy both,  
And all unworthy that are men with us  
Alive, lie swept from out the path of God ;  
And God's own City may itself arise  
Perchance on earth even as now on high.  
Thus much were my conviction which the mind  
Must cling to for some comfort : I must fall  
And with me all mine African great Church  
For Christ's sake and in Christ's name, over-  
whelm'd  
'Neath arm'd heresy that burns and slays  
By mercy Providential, knowing none.  
Such the sole comfort : that God's wisdom rules  
In worst disaster ! — And this human heart  
Is sore and sorrowing and self-ashamed,  
Saying unto the God who calleth me  
Soon to His presence as this weak frame yields

## AUGUSTINE

Worn-out with years — saying to God : ‘ I heed  
‘ Indeed the lesson ; but mine heart is sore.’ —

O thou great City of Christ in Africa  
For whose establishment mine earnest years  
With voice and hand and screed devotedly  
Have struggled and attempted in the name  
Of God’s Word and the Will of Him who died !  
O thou, God’s grace upon the face of earth,  
Earth’s inspiration faith-fill’d, leading on  
Each member of the body politic,  
Each person of the City of Earth, in God  
From grossness of the carnal lust and strife  
Toward peace of heavenly perfectedness —  
Thou Church ! — to see thee perish utterly  
Even as I faint and am not swift to save ;  
Even as I pass and never may return  
To be thy builder and renew thy strength !  
Verily, verily the heart is sore  
(O Lord, forgive the old man full of days !).  
Ah ! to see all the faithful stricken down,  
Blinded and scourged, robb’d, ravish’d, and enslaved,  
The bishop and the presbyter, the flock  
Shepherded of them, one and all betray’d

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Unto the ravening of the Vandal wolves !  
And to desert my people at the last,  
Myself to steal away unto my God  
Whilst they my people suffer at the maw  
Of Genseric, I leaving them alone ;  
Evading as a traitor from the world :  
Entering lone into felicity !  
And to reflect that, most of all, our woes  
Have come of too keen controversial  
Dispute, dividing peoples patriot else  
(Nay, placing dogma and our discipline  
Above all civil duty), and thereby  
Denuding provinces of self-defence ;  
In name of such and such a pettiest point  
Of doctrine persecuting ruthlessly,  
When all by some complacent compromise,  
Haply as close to truth as either creed  
(I being in error acknowledged, many times !),  
Had saved strength for the struggle to sustain  
Life of the Church against this Vandal death !  
And I have been chief controversialist  
Through all my days— O Lord, the heart is sore ! —

Forgiveness, Christ ! Did not Thyself, as now

## AUGUSTINE

Thy Church, but perish that this world might live ?  
Did not Thy death ensure to all mankind  
The freedom of God's City (by Thy Grace  
Against our all-demerit) ? And shall now  
Thy Church, so wholly Thine, perish in vain ?  
What are the failures of the private man,  
Mine errors multifold upon me proved,  
But fair successes in the Plan of God,  
Points in procedure of His Providence ?  
Surely, of human sin original  
Accumulated through the thousand years  
Of Rome and Godlessness, am I but God's  
Exemplar, and the Church that was my work  
But instance of the worthlessness of man  
Who builds for earth without full faith that God  
Will alter earth after His own behest  
Nor heed our disappointment ! Let mine heart  
Be sore, that in its bitterness be proved  
The impotence of dreams Pelagian  
(Asserting man's too-independent power  
Of self-regeneration by good-will !)  
Which I opposed, but in opposing made,  
By my too-sure assertion of the truth,  
Mine own ! Ay, Lord ! let then mine heart be sore !—

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Let then mine heart be sore ; that Genseric  
May blindly represent Thee, wreak Thy will  
On Rome's inherited philosophies,  
Her dogmas and denials, sophisms all,  
Pagan or Christian — and myself have been  
Chief churchman of their sophists ! In the world  
Is all Thy will. As now unto Thy will  
And to the City of God on earth, the Church  
Of faith beyond denial, I resign  
My Bishophood. — For I have known the sweets  
Of the old false way : and the heart is sore.

## AVERROËS

WHAT though the Caliph and the questioners  
Condemn ? Shall that affect philosophy ?  
Shall the religion of the common mind  
Reprove mine Aristotle ? He, be it sure,  
Were scarce fit food for zealot-ignorance !  
The culture of the highest were no cure  
For crude fanaticism ! At their complaint  
Thus much I may admit. — But none the less  
Is the religion of the Prophet nought  
Considerable to the cultured mind ;  
Nowise respectable to reasoning !  
Let their Mohammed in his purblind zeal  
Control and guide them, fervently enough  
If quite inconsequently, in a way  
Of rectitude sufficient to their wants.  
But let them not presume to teach me creeds  
Contrary to my reason, when the mind  
Under that guidance of the Stagirite  
Hath earnestly achieved, beyond their ken,  
A knowledge of the universal law  
Whereto the Prophet is as nothingness.—  
Mohammed, for the ignorant who need

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

A sign and symbol ; but the Stagirite,  
In perspicacity of intellect  
Preceptor to the cultured : such the way  
Of compromise ! I never meant to teach  
The universe of lore impersonal  
Unto their passionate vulgarity ;  
And do regret vulgarity was taught  
Truths beyond comprehension of the crowd,  
Hence to their blindness false. But, for myself,  
Never will I retract ; and I defy  
Caliph and questioners to do their worst  
In name of ignorance. Philosophy  
Shall still sustain me even unto death !

Never will I retract ; but fain would seek  
Still further insight of the ways of truth  
Absolute and unquestionable ! Yet,  
How strange the schism, how lone this intellect  
(Supposed an universal operance  
Of truth alike in every man of men !)  
In segregation from the fond belief  
Of thousands of our people ! Them I 've judged  
For right and wrong, doom'd them to weal or woe  
On plain assumption of some common ground

## AVERROËS

Self-evident and cognizable alike  
By clown or Cadi, of a moral law  
Applicable, with grade but of degree,  
To child or Caliph — yet at length I find me  
An old man isolate, assail'd by all,  
If so be, that my cognizance transcends  
In kind as in degree their ignorance,  
And leaves me with my Stagirite alone,  
Gnostic of God's eternal scheme of things  
Whereof not one of thousands round me here,  
These citizens and priests of Cordova  
(Themselves components one and all alike  
As soul-partakers in God's intellect),  
Hath any inkling ; every intellect,  
Save mine, all-unenlighten'd of the truth  
Which constitutes them and they constitute !  
And thus must I resort to doctrine scarce  
Compatible with any universe  
Of law-wrought intellect, but in itself  
Too like their crude religion : how the mind  
Of them who with my reason disagree  
May scarce at all partake of final truth,  
But rightly rests whence none may hope to lift  
Unto the light ; I, in mine arrogance,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Missing that fair solution which might teach  
Salvation to the ignorant and still  
(Not, as their error, by Mohammed's creed)  
Achieve truth-satisfaction ! Compromise  
Or no, must my philosophy provide  
Religion in the very terms of truth,  
Knowledge in passionate belief ; else fail  
For me, for them alike. For life is so,  
Passionate in and through the Gnosis, still  
Cognizant though the blood with faith be mad !  
Wherein have I then by philosophy  
Miss'd the religion ; wherein doth their creed  
Show possibility of competence  
Unto the standard of a tested truth ?  
For, were their ignorant zeal some adumbration  
But of a system they would fain believe ;  
And were my consciousness of cosmic law  
But applicable to each actual fact  
Of personal experience (not as now  
Too subtly academic), how might we  
But reach some fair agreement, none the worse  
Of logic or devotion, for the new  
World-reconciliation ? And without  
Such reamalgamation might the world

## AVERROËS

Well be regarded as no universe  
Substance of law nor subject of a faith !

What, then, the requisite ; that faith like theirs  
Might truly mean an Aristotle's lore  
Adequate to an universe whose God  
Can scarce be but as Caliph overruling  
The human populace by Cadi's voice  
(Mohammed, but some Cadi speaking under  
A Caliph, not of Cordova, Bagdad,  
Forsooth, yet governing from æther-throne)?  
What truth, perchance within the reach of all,  
Might yield unto the world eternity  
In place of some creation ; to the soul  
Universality in place of death  
And judgment-doom imagined of their creed ?  
And, of my part, what liberality  
Of emphasis within the scheme of truth  
Learn'd of the Stagirite might bring my law  
To daily application and infuse  
Enthusiasm of a moral creed  
Within the serious teaching ? — Ay, what more true  
Than just this yearning of mine intellect  
To search and reach unto a loftier plane

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Than any yet achieved, that therein may  
My loneliness have solace and my lore  
Illumine their religion that it prove  
Consonant with philosophy ? What fact  
Of faith more patent than their striving toward  
Personal satisfaction in some sight  
Of system, order, though their order be  
Too much anthropomorphic ? Were the truth  
Even as the faith a fair development  
Out of the mind-indifferent physic-fact  
Toward ever yet more universalness  
Of implication, whilst, within the growth,  
Grows and keeps pace the person — that our passion  
And faith-enthusiasm shall nowise fade  
Into mere law-sublation, more than shall law  
Resolve itself to ignorant caprice :  
Were such the reconciliation 'twixt  
Their faith, my knowledge : then philosophy  
Were some religion, and the crudest creed  
Incident to truth-involution ! Such  
An universe of growth (here speaks again  
The exhaustless Aristotle !) would incite  
A truth of passion and a faith of law  
In the perpetual striving whereof each,

## AVERROËS

As each is in degree sane and aware,  
Intendeth truth, believeth in a law,  
Impassionate and saving, none the less  
Provable universal and in God,  
By dint of yearning, ever satisfied  
Without creation by a cause beyond  
Nor ultimate absorption in the Goal ;  
But as from first eternal endlessly !  
Thus were such world (of them and me at odds)  
Nevertheless one single systeming  
(Whereby my system were for them not false  
But merely as more-than-true beyond their souls)  
Of truth according to the Stagirite.  
For in the physic-fact original  
Lay bedded a conatus which within  
Almansor or myself, Ibn Roshd, alike  
By satisfaction-seeking is the truth,  
The law, the unity of intellect  
(Self's implication of the souls of all)  
And Godship to the humblest : all alike  
By yearning Godward, thus themselves the God  
Operant through the stuff primordial  
Of individuation ! Though I need  
Myself no God beyond such operance

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(Still less, the mere moon-motive put between  
Heaven and earth, the Godhead and the Man !),  
May he, the Caliph or the questioner,  
Require Mohammed and some æther-throne  
Without belying Godhood in himself,  
Without disjunction from philosophy.  
And therefore may their crude religious cult  
(Achieving ample rectitude for them)  
Be humanly considerable within  
My teaching learn'd now of the Stagirite ! —

Never will I retract. But yet my truth  
Comporteth with a fair acknowledgment  
(In this so late-won world-enthusiasm)  
Even of a truth which by interprestance  
I predicate as sure achievement of  
Their seeming ignorance. And I may well  
(Should persecution finally compel it !)  
Avow their Prophet, and be saved thereby  
From shameful death, but sully not my soul !  
Haply, and teach afresh this more-than-truth  
Unto their want-of-truth ; and lead them on,  
By means of mere religion, Godwardly !

## AQUINAS

THE flesh indeed is weary, though command  
Of Pope unto the Council calleth me.  
This bulk indeed is weary ; yet the spirit  
Must acquiesce though death itself ensue  
Of the arduous journey. Whence, expecting death  
(Though fearing not the least, and only sad  
That God through Pope and Council doth demand  
Cessation of my labors ere the Sum  
Of all Theology be tabulate),  
May I one last redaction make in mind  
Of my vast effort in the name of Faith  
Which Reason warrants, this my ponderous work  
Which open lies before me. For the spirit  
Hath strength still and desire to speak the truth  
Best, perfected, ere all my speech be done. —

Of God, of Man, and of the God-in-Man,  
The *Summa Theologiae*, the whole  
Of human wisdom or the best of it,  
Quintessence, at the worst, of every truth !  
The *Summa Theologiae*, man's Reason  
At service of the Faith, man's Faith directing

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The operation of a logic-law.  
For, as the God is other than His world  
Whilst yet its Cause Efficient ; whilst the world  
Is otherwise than God, yet work of Him  
And God-appetitive : so yet our Reason  
Hath appetite of Faith ; and Faith is cause  
Of all our proof's discourse. No skill can prove  
To Reason-satisfaction aught of truth  
Without Faith ; nought of Faith can be conceived  
Save as by process of the intellect :  
Even as, within the province of our thought  
Are universals individuated  
By fact-material within the form  
Specific-spiritual ; the genera,  
Although to human mind unthinkable  
Save individuate, none less by law  
Of spiritual entity believed  
To be angelic, emanate of God,  
And from within dominant of our dreams  
Of personal independence, by control  
Of the mere body ; our spiritual part—  
Without all person as we know of person  
Within the world — by grace nevertheless  
Of God's predestination (misunderstood)

## AQUINAS

And not intelligible save to Faith)  
Destined to individual supreme  
Whilst death destroys our individual.  
Even thus doth Reason (by our intellect)  
Prove of its own known insufficiency  
The final perfecting achieved by Faith  
In high theology. And here the Sum  
Of all Theology would stand portray'd  
With scheme of God and Man and, for the last  
And best (to reconcile the miracle),  
The God-in-Man, the Christ upon our earth,  
God's intermediary and the world's,  
Angel within the body, guardian  
Of the truths unthinkable preserved for men  
Till death release and open eyes of Faith  
To comprehend as now we dimly feel :  
Christ, the true demiurge, the compromise  
And come-between, required of our mind  
For comprehension of the worldliness  
Of God or Godliness within the world :  
Our intellect's salvation, Reasoning Faith !

Yet (might a mere man dare transgress the bounds  
Of Reason's finitude, and, trespassing

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

On Faith, without Faith dare envisage truth  
As Christ may, and pronounce of right or wrong  
By logical insistence on the ways  
Of premise and conclusion !) how might he  
(Such heretic blasphemer !) dream a scheme  
Unlike the true scheme of our Reason-Faith  
Yet sprung of Faith-in-Reason, making world  
Some God-in-Man, as even now is Christ  
Best explanation of the world He saves ?  
I tremble at the subtlety, ashamed  
At such temptation. Yet some power within  
Impels me and allures to try with test  
Of intellect alone the things of Faith  
In shame-faced half-apology to God  
(As Jesus Christ without apology  
In terms of intellect might prove the Faith  
Some merely natural Reason of Himself !)  
Prying into the mysteries conceal'd —  
For all that Revelation we conceive ! —  
Of spiritual being. Will not God  
Forgive, nor Aristotle disapprove  
One who but keenly as the Stagirite  
(With Reason sanctified in Christ, for Faith !)  
Searcheth the Revelation, as the Greek

## AQUINAS

Search'd but the natural knowledge of the soul ?  
Will God forgive a Stagirite in Christ  
Whose Reason, waiving Faith, is more than Faith ?  
And must not any search conclude at last  
In Christ ; and need the Christian be afraid ?  
But, ha ! were not the Reason's stumbling-block  
And Faith-compulsion just this fact of Christ  
Supposed the intermediary demiurge  
Partaking of both natures, God and Man ?  
Himself the intercessionary aid  
In that dilemma of the infinite  
At touch with finite : God, cause of a world ?  
Yet, with the goal of logic-in-the-Faith  
So clear before me, let me logically  
Without recourse to Faith prove both of God  
And Man that sans Christ's intermediacy  
Were neither God nor Man as God and Man  
Must be conceived unto our intellect  
If they be verily truth-known at all  
For finite-infinite as Christ is known.  
Though yet, what revolution in the ways  
Of premise and conclusion, of our proof  
Itself, if so be Christ be provable  
Unto our Reason, as without a Faith,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

For actual truth of body, both, and soul !  
What alteration of the scheme of truths  
Divine or human, as the human soul  
Might comprehend the intercession new !  
But shows not Christ supremely thinkable  
(Example of the perfect natural life  
Of Man in the world at unison with God —  
If sinful none, yet humanly as finite !)  
Without resort to Faith in any kind :  
Himself that very form-material,  
That spiritual-body, genus-fact  
Of individual specific still  
Because divine, personal yet and owning  
A world relational of membership  
Whereof the Christ-identity in flesh  
Were finite member, but which as a world  
Were nought than Christ's inferr'd pragmatical  
Being, as Christ is conscious of the whole  
Within His sympathy, and died therefor ?  
What ultimate Reason, shorn indeed of Faith  
Yet needing none ; solving antinomy  
Of finite-infinite (scarce by pantheism,  
But by pan-Christhood !), of God and the world  
Which otherwise were noway reconciled ;

## AQUINAS

Solving the mystery not as I deem'd  
Through mediation merely — which would yield  
But duplication of the paradox  
Of infinite from finite still demark'd  
Within Christ's person and none less within  
Relation of the God or world to Him —  
Not merely by intrusion as between  
Two partialities, but by conclusion  
Of both, sublate, in Christhood ; so, by proving  
Christ-intermediary but a name  
For God or world rightfully understood,  
Self-comprehended by the all-seeing soul  
Of Faith-transcendent logic : how no world  
Might be, save if in every membership  
Infinitely completed and inferr'd  
Interminably through all membership  
From each self-focus personal of truth ;  
And therefore in each membership divine,  
Howe'er by postulate's hypothesis  
Also all-human and a work-created  
Indeed ! How no God (spare the blasphemy !)  
Might be, save personal and therefore part  
Of His own handiwork, explaining it  
As He is self-explain'd in terms of truth

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Worldwise, and known in every truth as Christ!—  
Thus far, for Reason working without Faith  
Unto expression of an hyper-Faith  
By logic: no mere exclusion, yea and nay,  
Which by the choice 'twixt two coördinates  
(Truth and untruth !) by severating them  
Selectionwise obliterates to nought  
Even the supposed distinction ; but a proof  
Conclusive of each part as also whole  
By differential inference, by oneness  
In virtue of an incoördination  
Final, nowise selective *inter se*  
To indetermination, but distinctly  
This and all others, positive-negative  
United, infinite and finite both ;  
Christ only! — world and God alike but name  
For truth's two aspects ; intermediation  
*In propria persona*, God-and-Man :  
Who neither, save in Christ, were Man or God,  
World or Creator ; but in Christ are so !

Lo ! by the Faithless logic stands approved  
The very mystery which Faith alone  
Can but propound, which Reason led by Faith

## AQUINAS

Can but pronounce by miracle achieved  
And best accepted without questioning ;  
Yet which the Reason, freed of fear for Faith,  
Proudly elaborates to perfect proof  
And solvent-satisfaction ! How might I  
Justify then the angelologism  
Of demiurge interpolate between  
A God and world, a sheer Faith and a Reason,  
A genus and an individual ;  
When in fair truth are God and Man alike,  
World or the World-Creator, person or  
Species, incomprehensible save as  
Themselves the demiurge, the God-in-Man,  
The genus-individual, the person  
Yet comprehensive of a fact without  
Which scarce were fact save as we reason of it,  
Which scarce were truth save for the soul that sees ?  
How justify the Christ call'd mystery  
(All being but Christ in that we reason of Him,  
And thereby *in persona* mediate  
Ourselves 'twixt any God or world whate'er —  
Which were not severally God nor world !)  
Save on assumption of a God, a world  
Separate and irreconcilable

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

By any Christhood — as my proof hath shown ? —  
Alas ! for this my *Theologiae*  
*Summa* ! I may not work upon it more  
Until the Faith return in which I wrought  
Blindly perchance, but reverently far  
Beyond this mood of Reason-frowardness  
Wherein this hour hath moved me to blaspheme !  
Alas ! for this mine undertaking ! Christ,  
Canst Thou allow that any truth of Thee  
Shall come to nought, that any labor'd love  
Of God, felt humbly as the child might feel  
God's inspiration, shall in blasphemy  
End and be self-destroy'd ? Perchance mankind  
May take the labor and the law of Faith,  
The love-humility, and let it lie  
For proof of inspiration — nor perceive  
The rational induction as from Christ  
His comprehension and example shown  
Self-cogitant beyond all mystery  
(Impertinence unfit for merely man !);  
The logic-inference of Faith-less lore,  
This hour hath shown me ? There the *Summa* lies  
Unfinish'd, never from my hand and heart  
To receive sentence more ; for fear my fall

## AQUINAS

May self-betray upon the patient page  
The intellect's rebellion unawares !  
There the work lies. And I must undertake  
My journey to the Council to defend  
Our Christianity ; though heresy  
Gnaw at mine heart, and fain would I be dead  
Liefer than bear dispute where soul herself  
Hath died down unto embers with the weak'ning  
Of my vast body strangely sick to death.  
Rather a death upon the arduous road,  
Though sick at soul beside and self-despairing  
Of any absolution, than blaspheme  
In folly of dispute where no belief  
Gives basis to the assertion. Fondly, Lord !  
I pray Thee, bless this journey with release  
By death ; that, ere the Council, shall mine eyes  
Of Faith re-open, and my blasphemy  
End with some resurrection ! E'en though flame  
Of Hell receive my spirit, yet, O Lord !  
Compel not to the public sacrilege  
Of double-tongued dispute ! My *Summa* lies  
A monument at least of piety,  
An edification to the centuries.  
Grant, in the name of this, release by death !

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Grant for the sake of labor wrought in love  
That no exposure ruin that I writ  
In humble service of Thy mystery,  
But which in weakness of my body now  
To blasphemy have secretly betray'd !

## LUTHER

A MIGHTY stronghold is our Lord of Hosts,  
A refuge and a very present help  
In time of trouble. — Were this Wartburg sure  
Without God's guardance and my trust in Him ?  
God guardeth best those that have trust in Him.

God's guardianship by this my trust in Him !  
These move the world anew, these shake the towers  
Of thousand Wartburgs that have not my faith.  
The fabrics of the works of many men  
Burst unto dust but by my living faith.  
Saint Thomas and the Schools, bishop and Pope  
Blind to the beauty of sweet Augustine,  
Awake at the word of one poor recreant priest  
Teutonic, ay, titanic by a faith.  
'I can no more. God help me.' — And in that  
Word's intimate reliance came the light,  
The truth's assurance. And I turn'd and stepp'd  
A little from them into God's sunshine  
And Germany's free country ; and am free,  
Free of the spirit limitless in God,  
Though of my body and my body's works

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Incarcerated by a patron's care  
Lest harm befall. I cheerfully allow  
The imprisonment that so the soul stay free ;  
Concealment, that the world through me may  
know  
God's wonderworking by faith's grace alone !

Doubtless the way of man is daily work.  
God's grace vouchsafeth not where gluttony,  
The battening of lone convented folk  
Burdens the laboring brethren of the field  
Or sweating city or the mining-pit  
To the support of idle sluts and drones.  
Doubtless the way is work, as I shall show  
By fair example set in God's good time,  
Laboring, wedding, fathering stalwart sons  
And daughters to be ministers of God  
In the world and vessels of His faith and grace.  
Surely the way is work, mistake me not,  
Ye future freely working humankind,  
For any apostle of an idleness !  
Yet are the works of man but vanity  
By sin original, the ways of man  
A mockery against the ways of God,

## LUTHER

Save faith transcend the paltry falling-short,  
Trust in the universal rule of truth  
(Truth, valent but by belief the all-powerful !)  
Absolve the error, and our penitence  
Be perfect triumph, not by merit earn'd  
Of scourge and penance, but by assurance, through  
Christ's intercession and the heart of God  
(That intercession and that heart within me)  
Compassionate of His lost handiwork,  
Assurance of salvation unto those  
Who wholly love and suffer — and are glad.  
For thus is penance privately entail'd,  
A contriteness of spirit, a pact between  
The soul and God, man's proper stand of soul  
In the presence compassionate though awful yet  
Of Him his maker : not a rule imposed  
Extrinsic of interpretance by phrase  
Of Peter or the Pope's usurping screed.  
The Bull of Pope's-indulgence were as nought ;  
The strict monastic discipline no source  
Of purification, save the church-within,  
The cloister of confession in the heart,  
Impose the ordinance, to show all men  
The power in grace that trust hath o'er the soul.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

God's guardianship is but my trust in Him,  
The power in grace that faith hath o'er the soul! —

Nay, do I hear detractors who exclaim :  
'A thousand churches for a thousand men  
'This Martin fain would build : no Church at all  
'Compelling, overruling, yielding peace  
'By questionless authority — a man,  
'This Luther, who would substitute for God  
'On earth in the Church the passion-rule of self,  
'Discord and chaos come again.' How now ?  
I answer : 'Where the way of each is right  
'In personal cognizance of the voice of God  
'Can come but concord, an accord of each  
'In his mere time and place with timeless, whole  
'Ordinance and establishment beyond  
'The petty understanding of the mind !'  
(Ah ! dared I say : 'Yet human none the less,  
'Yet temporal in mine eternal soul' !) —  
Thus will a Church arise, not consecrate  
To scarce-disguised idolatries, not back'd  
By fiction, legends of a spirit-world  
Man scarce hath seen, and lived ; but ordered in  
Community of purpose to oppose

## LUTHER

Presumption, blasphemous assumption of  
God's office on the part of any man  
Over his fellows, each of whom by grace  
Of faith is godly (and no God beside  
In the world save operant as healing faith) —  
Community of protest to be free  
And worship, each communicant, by joy  
Of the inward light, howe'er it come to him,  
Perfervid, wholesome, stalwart, practical  
Through the world of God which is the world of men  
And women, vessels of His faith and grace.

O bountiful earth-nature ! Field and sky,  
Clouds and the forest-clouds upon the face  
Of the field as heaven ! O toilers in my sight,  
Women and men providing, from the field  
And forest, sustenance to rear your young,  
Sinews of faith and grace ! O, hear ye me ! —  
This Wartburg falleth as the works of men  
Must ever fall. Yet, firm by providence  
Of Him who made me, by zeal of him who put me  
A prisoner here assured for safer times —  
Nay, through my faith ! — this Wartburg still shall  
stand

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

When all save God and soul are pass'd away :  
A stronghold by the guardance of our God —  
By faith of the spirit — symbol on earth of God :  
Stronghold ; high Refuge ; very Present Help !

## LOYOLA

*AY, ad majorem Dei gloriam,*  
His splendor in the world as evidenced  
In Peter's power through the See of Rome,  
And in preferment of this Company,  
Mine Order and myself creator of it !  
Unto that end all means are profitable  
And righteous whatsoever, if the end  
But best be served : a logic practical,  
An ethic Macchiavellian (Christ save  
Its pagan perpetrator !), sane, self-proved.  
And to that end is much self-evident  
Of ways and method organizing men :  
All to be builded of obedience,  
Blind substitution of command for cause,  
Discipline overruling reason ; yea,  
Conscience obliterate in servitude ? —  
Amen ! Were any conscience other than  
Acknowledged servitude to rules of right ?  
Might any rules of right stand more confirm'd,  
Establish'd beyond peradventure, than  
Decretals of the very Vicar of Christ  
(Christ but the Vicar of God), and thus through him

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Orders, commands of each superior  
From General down to novitiate —  
Straight substitute for God where otherwise  
Were little leading and no feeblest light —  
As evidence Hussites and Lutherans ?

Thus I establish it : obedience  
In furth'rance of the greater glory of God  
On earth, obedience without any let  
Nor hindrance of conviction personal  
Beyond conviction that to serve is right.  
Thus I establish it to high and low  
Of the Company — yet what of mine own self ?  
What of the least of them, stood he as I  
Commanding, without book to bind behest,  
Freely, dependent upon God alone  
Who speaks not plainly, leads by little light  
And suffers interpretance equivocal ?  
Am I obedient, or were such an one,  
Below me, but obedient who stood  
Suddenly faced of some fresh circumstance  
Not fair foreseen, not pre-provided for ?  
Can conscience (and originality  
Be requisite !) be, after all, the source

## LOYOLA

Of truth and best for service even of God ?  
For, lo ! if every means be justified  
That leadeth to God's end, what surety  
Save conscience can convince (my case at least)  
Of purity of purpose, 'propriateness  
Of circumstance and accident unto  
The goal and substance — what but reasoning faith  
(Not blind obedience !) can assure the soul  
Of justification unto any end,  
Of true fulfilment of the perfect plan  
Itself : *majorem Dei gloriam?* —  
Lay I not sick in anguish many days,  
A warrior not yet dedicate to God,  
But fill'd of the fume of the camp, and ignorant  
In every line of learning ; when upon me  
There came a call of conscience, not of man,  
And bade me unto vigils and the oath  
Of Mary : that chastity and poverty  
Which hath been in my case sufficient to  
The saintly life — beyond obedience ?  
Have I not many years by diligent zeal  
As student late in life amass'd in mind  
The myriad lore of universities,  
Making myself as teacher unto men,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Inditing with a wisdom sorely earn'd  
The spirit-regimen that makes of man  
(By vigil, apparition, visual trance)  
Best devotee, most valued proselyte  
Of the Order, Fellow of my Company ?  
And hath this life-career been otherwise  
Than instigate of conscience thoroughly  
Without obedience to any man,  
But rather in face of all authorities  
Compelling even Pope and Holy See  
To slow acceptance of the proffer'd help,  
Reluctant permit to be serviceable ?  
Thus have I wrought, without obedience,  
Better than had I been obedient  
To any call my conscience disapproved :  
Conscience, that sense of universal right,  
Of God, within the individual soul !  
And am I otherwise than other men ?

With that interrogation stands or falls  
The Company of Jesus. It must stand ! —  
I, then, am otherwise than other men,  
Not subject to the law I needs impose  
On other men unto the glory of God.

## LOYOLA

Unique am I; to other men, as God  
To me ; as soul to body (no Pope himself —  
Elective, not soul-chosen — were as I  
Christ's representative !); and men must be  
Obedient to my precepts to serve Christ  
And me who serve best Christ by ruling them.  
All were as Hussites and as Lutherans  
Alike who lack'd this special light of law  
Which, emanate from God within my soul,  
Is conscience within me, but unto them  
Command imperative. The vow shall stand  
A sign unto the ages; servitude  
Made glorious: questionless obedience  
Even unto death and sin — the sin absolved  
By my transcendence who pronounce all sin  
Committed by command but righteousness,  
Upbuilding this our Company, upholding  
The See of Rome to greater glory of God.  
So let the justification be by works,  
Corroborative of the theorem.  
Let results speak and prove what-means-soe'er  
Appropriate to the end approved of God  
Toward making men wholly God's puppetry.  
And (as mine Order shall absorb mankind)

## **POEMS OF PERSONALITY**

**Myself shall be (in humblest reverence,  
I dare to trust) the last and greatest Man,  
Creator of the sainthood militant :  
Myself, prime Saint without inheritor.**

## XAVIER

THE Goans and the Cochinese have been  
And poor pearl-seekers of the Fishing Coast  
Chiefly my field of labor under God  
Since first from Lisbon on these sapphire seas  
I voyaged, obedient to my General  
Loyola, loyal to the call of Christ.  
Here of these glistening Indies hath my work  
Prosper'd and brought prosperity of soul  
Unto these simple folk, dark-skinn'd, soft-voiced,  
Who needed only Christ and Christian faith,  
The tongue of truth and leading unto God  
To be so easily heart-taught and saved —  
So easily that some must e'en misconstrue  
My modest ministry for miracle !  
By hundreds or by thousands may I count  
The sheep of this new pasture : not enough  
Where millions, daily cowering, wail before  
Dark idols in sick-smelling champak wreaths  
And withering jasmines ; not enough where bells  
Harsh-jangled and the fume of bitter blood  
From burnt flesh-offering, faugh ! human and beast  
Offend God's nostril and annoy His ear.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The Goans and the Cochinese in part  
Or poor pearl-seekers of the Fishing Coast  
I count among Christ's children. What of those  
Whom only want of opportunity,  
The chance prevention of enlightenment  
(For chance it seems, howe'er ordain'd of God !),  
Benights and dooms at death as here on earth  
Unto some Hell of dusk idolatry ?

There are who do entreat the dark-of-skin  
As by necessity the dark-of-soul,  
Forgetful of that *Æthiopian*  
Whom Philip did baptize ; and of this proof,  
If proof were needed, now of Malabar.  
Not so doth God who sendeth me to save  
Through grace of Christ the sinners dark of skin  
Proven less dark of soul than many a man  
Cradled beneath the bounty of the Babe !  
And yet the grave perplexity remains  
Of ignorance and wickedness foredoom'd  
In these God's folk-potential save for my  
Fortuitous advent, insufficient zeal  
Which scarce sufficeth for one millionth part  
Of men's salvation, in these Indies now

## XAVIER

Alive, and toucheth nothing of those, dead  
Since Christ, yet unforewarn'd of pains of Hell !  
Doth God, though leading through Ignatius' word  
And my obedience, suffer yet His sheep  
To wait the chance of men's infirmity  
(My constancy at proof ; my health, perchance,  
Subject to every tropical unease)  
For soul-salvation or eternal death ?  
Doth God set man, myself, a task without  
Limit or possibility wherethrough  
Alone by infinite accomplishment,  
Executance instantaneous, might I  
Acquit me worthily, achieve in God  
Aught adequate to human righteousness ?  
The mystery seems irresolvable :  
I, honestly devoted, doom'd at best  
To infinite dishonor and defeat  
For want of some omnipotence ; these men  
Of Indies doom'd, save only two or three  
From many, to some Hell by my default !  
I voyage onward to extend God's name  
And Christ's high purpose unto lands remote  
And men of hues uncouth (Moluccans ; else  
The yellow Mongol race ?) — to spread the seed

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

No doubt ! But what of very voyaging ?  
What of this gradual inadequacy,  
This perishing of millions whilst I earn  
The infinite saviorhood for one or two,  
And for myself — so moderate must be men's  
Criterion ! — some crown of saintliness ?  
The problem spreads, inclusive of all ways  
Of God with man, of man within his soul :  
The pitiable mean accomplishment —  
Self-shamed ; there lurks the crux of this dismay ! —  
For lack of infinite power ; and therethrough  
The doom of innocence on every hand ;  
Doom of those unconverted and myself ;  
Doom likewise in degree of every man.  
The problem is in brief : Man, with a soul  
God-like responsible, yet is not God ;  
How then be worthy of our God, yet Man ?

Behold, as in this faith-extremity  
I cast myself upon this wavering plank  
Prone upon knees to pray — and all the air  
Is full of inspiration (and yon men,  
The ship's swarth company, retire apart  
Leaving me space for privileged communion),

## XAVIER

And under me I feel the heave of the sea  
Interminable, and above my head  
The blue interminable and the clouds  
Ceaselessly travelling athwart the face  
Of heaven — and all is kind unto my thought  
To foster, strengthen, and protect in faith  
By influence beneficent and peace  
In element-performance under God —  
So under God upsurges in my soul  
A clarity, a fair infinitude  
Of aspect and of outlook. Though I be  
Inly foredoom'd, yet God Himself did take  
Finitude thus upon Him, and in Christ  
Did touch of men some score in Galilee  
(And they were fisher-folk as these of Ind!)

And in Jerusalem, but not in Rome  
Nor yet in Goa nor Negapatam.

I voyage on, my very little space  
Beyond the Christ, as Christ His little space  
Travell'd and touch'd upon the surging throng  
But here and there : for all the infinite need !

I have learn'd God : how God's mere infinite  
Were emptiness, and nothing were perform'd  
Were all complete (as some sage Singhalese

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Themselves asserted, following the creed  
Of Prince Asoka from some antique time !) ;  
How finitude entails accomplishment ;  
And God the infinite Accomplisher  
Became of inmost self-necessity  
(Nay, was from first, as Athanasius saith)  
Essential Finitude, the Man of men !  
The mystery were thus resolvable :  
That, God being also finitude, so man,  
In virtue of each least accomplishment  
By will and purpose, effort to perform  
Insistent, conscienced, were as God Himself  
Christlike establisher of heaven-on-earth,  
Cause of infinity. And, in degree  
As each feels failure, is infinitude  
In him establish'd, and through him in all  
Who hearken to his tale of Man the Christ.  
And, for the rest, shall Christ not yet suffice  
In some long purgatory by His grace  
Not unbeneficently to redeem  
The dark-of-soul, whatever outward hue  
Their ignorance hath worn under the sun ? —  
Some ignorant might well enough maintain  
The fantasy that even without Christ,

## XAVIER

Through their sad Gautama or Krishna fierce,  
Each swarth idolater doth save himself  
By faith in idol-gods upon the earth  
(Their faith, as mine, the test of saving truth !)  
And effort to live manfully by them ?  
But I, I value God reveal'd, not dream'd :  
Not I ; I voyage in the name of Christ !

## PALESTRINA

THE mandate of Pope Pius, the decree  
Of Council, finally the Cardinals,  
Those eight commission'd, Borromeo most  
And Vitellozzi, pressing with appeal  
That music in the Church — surely a clear  
High contrapuntal canon of command ! —  
That music in the Church shall be reform'd  
And I reform it — by formality  
Fresh-liberated, free of the Flemish mode  
Of intricate conceit, yet quite by rule  
Of law newly-devised with dignity  
In place of decoration ; consecution  
Appropriate to expression of the creed  
Or service, offertory, praise, or prayer,  
Rather than some profane inanity  
Of madrigal translated, out of point,  
To vulgarize the heavenly acclaim.

A fair reform ! Yet surely I have heard  
Of one who, barbarous German renegade,  
Hath undertaken to reform far more  
Than merely music ; hath denied both Pope

## PALESTRINA

And Council and the holy Cardinals ;  
Denied authority of men o'er men  
As intermediate authorities  
'Twixt man and God (an overt blasphemy  
Decrying God-establish'd hierarchies  
Essential to religion and the Church —  
Fault damnable), and so hath reft the Church  
In twain with his reforms ; and music too :  
Reduced to lawless maundering, as they say. —  
A situation strange : authority  
Demanding of mine art that at the word  
Of Pope or Council or of Cardinal  
(With threat of abolition should she fail !)  
Music shall yield, and yield the world a law ;  
Mine art, obedient to authority,  
Become authority as God to man !

At first acceptance (God forbid the fault  
Of heresy !) yet find I in my soul  
Somewhat of Luther : keen to push reform ;  
Whilst as creator, artist in mine heart,  
Indignant at the connoisseur-command —  
At the word of ignorance (placed ne'er so high)  
Demanding this or that accomplishment

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Out of the spirit that should yield to God  
Alone (not man !) the satisfaction of  
Its innermost devotion. I adore  
Man Borromeo, were he ne'er so saint,  
In manner to award him prayer and praise  
Out of the fulness of a reverent soul ?  
Doth any proud position in the Church  
Give artist-insight such that at the word  
Shall spring forth pæan from the barren brass ?  
Almost would I too tear the Church in twain  
Than make my music at a churchman's nod !  
I fancy, too, those tunes of Martin's make  
Are not so bad as Cardinals would claim.  
I deem there must be something said therein  
Straightforward, suited to solemnity,  
Appropriate to a service meant for God :  
Perceiving how the man who speaks in them  
Speaks as the artist-soul original,  
All-independent of the fear of man  
And making music in the name of God !  
Somehow the case is not so wholly clear  
Despite that counter-canon of command :  
Whether it were not best to scorn command  
And serve but God, well as my will may do,

## PALESTRINA

All-independent of the fear of man ?  
Music were made, at worst, for music's best  
(And therefore best for prayer and praise of God),  
Were I to make by impulse as I must  
(Regardless of the Church, her proud demand)  
An earnest, genuine, heart-yearning song  
Soaring to God's own throne, not lost athwart  
Their aisles and transepts of the Lateran.

An earnest, genuine song, made beautiful  
In all the beauties of the sanctuary —  
The Church her proud demand, even as mine !  
Mine ! for am I the man, or mine the mode  
To be as Martin and his homely psalm ?  
Am not I, working at my music's best  
And quite regardless of the fear of man,  
Yet, as spontaneous creator, still  
Source of an hierarchy, in myself  
Church, Council, Cardinal, and Pope ; my song  
A counter-canon of authority  
Given, regiven, verberant abroad  
In firm reēcho from the primal theme  
(The primal God) reiterant and still  
Reiterant down through God's servitors

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The highest, Pope and Cardinals, and then  
The lowlier dignitaries to the least :  
So aggrandizing ever the glory of God  
By imitation to the outermost  
Boundaries of His realm illimitable ?  
Is not the method of the Church mine own,  
And am not I the man who in myself  
Sum up, express, pour forth (as Cardinal  
Or Pope or Council never may pour forth)  
The spirit of Peter, the transmission of  
The splendor apostolic, consecrate  
In laying on of hands, crown upon crown  
Blessing the consecration of command ?  
Such the best freedom, such the late-found  
    law  
Reforming every old formality  
By fresh insistence on the power of God  
In Holy Church her wondrous formulæ  
Of intervention, man and man between  
Each man and God — even the Pope supreme  
Only as God, the Last, is over him :  
God, the God-given motive in my mind ! —  
No more of Martin's music — good, no doubt,  
For him ; but not for me the master-hand

## PALESTRINA

Of music apostolic, laying on  
My manumission of high prayer and praise.—

This Borromeo, Vitellozzi, Pope  
And Council, what is it they crave of me ?  
A Mass, to be exemplar to the age  
Of meaning, music made appropriate  
To Holy Church, her use and services ?  
I am the man and mine the mode ; I make  
Them three—a trinity, for Cardinals  
And Pope and Council : representing God !

## AKBAR

THERE is no God but God; and I, El Akbar,  
Am representative of God on earth  
As in the heavens the Sun. Whence to the  
Sun,  
Celestial Emperor, lord paramount  
Of skies and potentate of God's decrees  
As written nightly in the further stars—  
Whence to the nearest Word of all God's words  
Interpretable of the astrologers  
I daily make prostration : morn and noon,  
Evening and at the midnight when ends both  
And re-begins the cycle of the skies :  
Four times (a number perfect, as 't is form'd  
Of a self-birth in symmetry of cause  
All ways) I, Akbar, Emperor of earth,  
Worshipping heavenward as the realm of earth  
Shall worship me ; that through both Emperors,  
The heavenly as the earthly, shall the power  
Of God be heralded and manifest,  
Proclaim'd devotionally by the act  
And faith of every servant of His name.

## AKBAR

There is no God but God ; and I, El Akbar,  
Am God on earth as in the heavens the Sun.—

'T is not enough that God should be on earth  
As any merely mild well-temper'd man,  
Or any struggler by the savage sword  
(As Jesus or Muhammad), not enough  
That He appear in vision, some mere dream  
Of power in contradiction to a fact  
Of impotence and failure as of him  
The Nazarene, else to some pettiness  
Of desert carnage and the sack of towns.  
(My father, thus, the pitiful Humayun,  
My grandsire, bold Babar, conqueror,  
Had rather been the deity to worship,  
Than I, consolidator, self-supreme !)  
'T is not enough that God should be on earth  
Despised, rejected, else held fearfully  
In hate enforced because of spear and sword  
Wielded insatiate. But God must be  
On earth in majesty and reverence,  
In power that is so beyond dispute  
(Mine obvious right, not any ancestor's !)  
That, being all-unopposed, 't is infinite.

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The wisdom and the clemency are mine,  
Made admirable but by the power within  
To scourge earth ; power, in mightier self-restraint !  
Not as Muhammad who but smote and slew ;  
Not as this Jesus of the Frankish monks  
Himself but smitten and spat upon and slain  
(Not as bold Babar nor the meek Humayun !) :  
But as the God, confirming the divine  
In mine own person, I may smite but will not  
Because I am beyond the sword of man !  
Enough for Jesus or that Arab chief ;  
Clods, of no Persian culture, Indic wealth :  
No Jew despised, no lesser-Tamerlane  
Of wrath and unrestraint can be as God  
Divine on earth. I, Akbar, am divine.

So much for creeds of earth. Shall those of heaven,  
These strange idolatries of Hindu slaves,  
Allure me with their multitude of gods,  
Unless some God be worthier than the rest,  
Some symbol of their all-being provide  
(Mix'd with the meaning of the Magian cult)  
A practical performance and a prayer  
Meet for this teeming people, them whose toil

## AKBAR

Is of the field and forest, of the rain  
And shine, all sky-dependent ? From the creed  
Of that Muhammad and the Nazarene  
Accept the old Hebraic unity  
Of power, though not in terms of them I scorn  
As humanly inadequate to be  
God-like, but in some nature-sign to show  
These Hindu vassals that divinity  
Which I and those selected of my court  
Must seek and find nowhere than in myself ?  
Let the sun serve, sith it is known to them  
By long-continued custom as a god  
(Creator doubtless by some means occult  
Of clouds and rains as of the parchèd dust)  
Whereto their reverence doth naturally  
Direct their prayer : that I may build upon  
Their superstition and credulity  
A further confirmation of the truth  
I gradually have evolved in mind :  
My Godship in my kingship absolute.—  
The Zarathushtrians have given excuse  
For this, the Parsis, fire-worshippers  
Whose tongue is Persian and whose heart is pure,  
Whose priests are persons of a liberal mind

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Fit to be functionaries of a cult  
That finds its patron in the Great Mogul ! —  
And lo ! into fire (let it but be believed)  
Our souls shall alter at the last decease  
And wander in spirit as a purity  
Through all things, quickening the life of each.  
A future fitter than a paradise,  
A merit meeter than that judgment-bar  
Imagined of those occidental creeds  
Which cramp divinity with more and less  
Of wrath or love and leave the soul a slave !

So, let the fire be for an holy sign ;  
And let the arch-priest, the sage and sweet Vizir,  
Bring forth the focus-glass that fire may fall  
From heaven upon the fuel here prepared  
As sacred hearth and shrine of empire.  
And let the courtiers and the people pay  
Respect to each and every lamp at night  
In courtyard or in palace, and receive  
Sun with obeisance ; as example shown  
Of my prostration publicly commands. —  
Behold ! in mosque or church or fane alike  
Is God but Akbar as He dwells on earth.

## AKBAR

And of this Akbar is the Sun in heaven  
High representative, a Power, a Fire,  
Focus and unity of every flame,  
Emperor, Potentate, all-absolute.—

There is no God but God ; and I, El Akbar,  
Am God on earth as in the heavens the Sun.  
*Allabu Akbar* — meaning : God is Great,  
Akbar is God — doubly declaring both !

## SHAKESPEAR

AH me ! mine own success I cannot reap !  
The groundlings flatter ; and I set me straight  
To write them just another such a piece  
As pleased — yet no jot can my stint repeat.  
So through these weary seasons hath it been  
(Belike I jest, yet in mine own despite !) —  
No respite from a fond progressiön.  
Though to deaf Heaven I bootless cry to keep  
My mind unmovèd, still must I undo  
All flattery, all praise obliterate  
With some new strange experiment to win  
The general — which, when their ear is won,  
E'en with its own slow-earnèd half-success  
Turns all attention, swerves all fair revènue  
From earlier sore-snatch'd popularity.  
Say it be won, the top of admiration :  
Othello hath no peer. Yet, seek as hard  
As wit may work to trick their wits again  
With any story of Boccaccio,  
With any old-wife's winter's evening's tale,  
The manner alters and the labor 's lost ;  
Until the groundlings (fickle as the gods,

## SHAKESPEAR

Yet favorable !) laud me the novelty —  
And then Othello's occupation 's gone,  
And all is unwell though it endeth well !  
To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow  
(Some humor find I in this high-flown strain  
Stealing the thunder-cloud of mine own bombast  
To vent this spleen with, mocking so myself !),  
To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow,  
Each day begins the business all anew ;  
And of the yesterdays no whit remains  
To arm me against seas of troubles new-stirr'd  
Betwixt me and the starvelings of the pit  
With every offering of a new-writ play.  
Ah ! could I twice re-write, re-vamp the old —  
'T were to be playwright then, if not to be  
Poet : the question — is the play the thing ?  
Would I might borrow and lend e'en of myself  
As of this Ariosto. Fain would I lose  
The loan itself (if not these friends therewith !),  
Sailing on flood of tide in mine affairs  
Rough-hew them though I should. The humor takes me,  
The thing's conceit. And yet 't would never do.  
I am no playwright; though the pit cry out  
On top of flattery, still I write beyond

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Their moment's gust, still unto heaven's gates  
Send larks ascending, still reap contumely  
At every first-night—till the twelfth night shines !  
And now am I turned punster, with ado  
O'er nothing yearning (ay, beshrew my soul  
For arrant knavery !) toward those comedies  
In error, which ne'er I may make again,  
Which paid so handsomely for house and field !  
Haply these chronicles of British kings  
(I have my share in), writ indifferent ill  
With help of friends, may bring in some revenue  
(So full of sounding words and stirring deeds !)  
And keep the wife's pot boiling as the stew  
On witches' heath ? But by my forthright art,  
Ah me ! I cannot reap mine own success —  
But mouth and mow anent some mad old Lear,  
Some whoreson Cleopatra in her cups ;  
Jesting at mine own impotence to be  
Up doing at my business of the stage —  
A passable actor, marry ; but a fool  
Not fit to know a failure at first-hand !

But now more honorably with mine art —  
Belike a way 'll be found in fair excuse,

## SHAKESPEAR

Some proof of method in this maddening shift  
From profitable comedy or some  
Tragic impressive popularity  
To, ever subtler and involvèd more,  
A high romancing o'er the general —  
This caviare I offer them for meat ?  
Mayhap I have my reason though my play  
Hath none ? There may be something in this soul  
Of honest Will the rhymester, as of Jaques  
In Arden, though his greenwood 's London town,  
That groweth all regardless of the want  
For reimbursement ; else, of beggary ?  
To London came I and was one of them,  
These players and purveyors of bad verse —  
Or worse ; to London ; and have been from first  
A peer if no small potentate among them,  
Adapting to the method of the time  
(Each time serves for the matter born in it !)  
My daily converse or my nightly song  
In wassail with the rest — as natural.  
Perchance I am two persons out of tune ;  
And this that lifts to speak before the bar  
Of wise examining within me now  
The nobler of the jangling ill-match'd twain ?

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Then let it speak and soothe to harmony  
(By overmastering of the discord harsh)  
The music that is melody indeed,  
Sweet reasoning and understanding sane !  
A man that hath not music — in himself  
Is beggary though he breathe the wooing air  
Of kingly palaces and crowds acclaim  
His pettiest perfections ! — So, to Lear !  
On with the petulant, pitiful old man  
So unlike idols of our England's stage,  
So lost a king, yet so inevitable  
Unto the shaping insight as I labor.  
On, to that infinite variety  
(Eternity still in her lips and eyes)  
Which custom hath not staled nor witherèd,  
My Serpent of 'Old Nile, bred o' the sun  
And slime, not of the town ! For I obey  
Necessity, must tell Othello's tale  
(This truculence of rhythm in my heart),  
Though he the Moor be set at naught thereby.  
Nothing must I extenuate nor warp  
In malice— trusting that such stuff as dreams  
Are made on must as dreams be builded up  
Out of the cloud-capt high imaginings

## SHAKESPEAR

Of multitudinous truths extemporized  
Of fantasy looking before and after —  
The hues of resolution richlier blown  
With every cast of thought. That thus no whit  
Ought I my stint of scripture to repeat  
As playwright flattering the groundlings' whim,  
To make the angels weep ; but I, proud man,  
Now manumitted of the fear of the pit,  
Dress'd in the poet's quick authority  
Eternalize my tongue ! Not monuments  
Of princes shall outlive mine impotent rhyme  
That, dying with the utterance, lifts again  
To grandeur witless of a withering ! —

The King hath e'en commanded us to play  
That prurient trick'd-up stew of Troilus  
Another time. I will not play it for him.  
I 've earn'd enough for competence without  
More ribaldry. — On with this doomèd Lear !

## DESCARTES

*Cogito, ergo sum!* — Gassendi hath  
And Hobbes, sour exile, none too courteously,  
Question'd the ultimatum ; and the rest  
Murmur of God. Mine answers have I sent  
(All that I care or dare say publicly !)  
In satisfaction to the crude complaints.  
And yet myself I cannot satisfy,  
Stirr'd by objection to subject my creed  
To keener criticism, a scrutiny  
More penetrating than the best of theirs.  
Mine axiom stands invulnerable. Now  
Let me best be my critic, through my faith  
In that self-certainty, allowing nought  
Contrary to that primal postulate  
To mar the logic-harmony ; but all  
'Soe'er of God or world, let it remain  
Only if consonant with final truth.  
*Cogito, ergo sum!* — Upon that rock  
I rear me, though the very heavens fall.

*Cogito, ergo sum!* — The vortices  
Of motion borne upon the stream of time

## DESCARTES

Contain no such criterion of truth  
Immediate, conclusive. Nay, nor God  
(Despite His putative eternity)  
Himself affords such certainty as this.  
That I have weakly yielded to the whim  
Of flattering outworn divinity,  
Allowing ‘truthfulness of will in God’  
To supplement the self-won principle  
For guarantee of certainty, but brings  
Shame to my soul, confusion to my creed  
In contrast to the plain nobility  
Of that enunciation clear, distinct,  
Which springs in introspection. ‘*Cogito*’ —  
Therefore all truths ‘soever of my soul  
Hold valid by inference of the human fact  
Of self-identity immediate.  
And God, so far as any need inheres  
Of guarantee against an ultimate doubt,  
Were supererogatory to my soul,  
Mere source of ultimate confusedness.  
Within mine intimate discovery  
Of doubt-transcending entity no flaw  
Demands God-resolution. This my soul  
Is absolute ; and, if somewise of God

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(As even I were scarce prepared as yet  
To contradict), hath no dependency  
By any virtue of residual doubt ;  
But is itself final criterion  
Of clearness and distinctness. All without  
The soul must seem indeed a source confused  
Of indirection and analogy,  
Fit object of the sweeping skepticism  
To which I aye subject it. If within  
Is certainty, without 's but theory  
Interpretative of sensations scarce  
Distinguishable, scarce beyond the beasts'  
Referable to reason. And, for this,  
Were God no supererogation, but  
Basic necessity, an warranty  
Be wanted, an the passions of the sense  
May anywise be clarified, subdued,  
And brought to order and a systeming.  
God may be Mind or no. His may be mine  
Absolute insight of self-being, yet  
(As His — as supplemental to the proof  
Within — beyond first incidence of mine)  
Not needed, nowise indispensable  
To mine assurance. But without the self

## DESCARTES

Were chaos, save some ordering God-will  
Creates, haply sustains, and orders all things  
Contrary to deception and impels  
The animal-spirits correctly to report  
Unto the soul in brain-stuff situate  
The manner of world-motions ; which, save only  
Mediance of the gland pineal, might  
Nowhere enact on thought an alterance  
Nor offer any information through  
Machineries of sense. But by God's will  
(And only by God's will miraculous)  
Doth motion indicate upon the soul  
Its indirections, its analogies  
Unto interpretation, skepticism  
And theory approximating toward,  
But never realizing, certainty  
Beyond some dubitation. Save for God,  
Might the man-mind in vain essay an insight  
Of worldly things, sans God beyond all reach  
Of any knowledge ; as the motion-world  
Of space-impulsion and of vortices  
Might wilder chaoswise, and none to heed  
Cosmic fatuity, for all the care  
With which upon the pulses of our brain

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The emanations and the corpuscles  
Might beat in vanity.— The vortices  
Contain no certainty like this of self.  
But God by act miraculous of will  
Orders the spirits-animal intervening  
To cause infection of the conscious soul  
And yield a knowledge where no knowledge is  
By any power of the human will.  
And thus were soul in this its certainty  
Confined unto volition which alone  
Is independent of the world-machine  
And of the intervened divinity.  
Thus were my will alone cause-of-itself  
And independent of a God beyond  
Who may or may not be *formaliter*  
Himself my will without affecting it  
Nor causing derogation from the truth  
Of certainty immediate. But thought,  
In so far as affected by the things  
Of motion and emotions of the sense,  
Essentially dependeth on the act  
Of God, and must upon His truthfulness  
Implicit place reliance ; that, sans God,  
Were all my doctrines of the vortices —

## DESCARTES

Their propagance of motion self-conserved —  
Of mechanism and geometry  
(Which seem so pseudo-clear, so false-distinct  
At least to cogitation) nothing more  
Than postulates, coördinates in God  
Of a proof, of a curvature nowise  
Intrinsically provable. And world  
Remains enigma, save our confidence  
In God be perfect beyond skepticism !

And can the soul that once hath known itself  
In thought's immediate certainty rest thus  
In confidence upon a God unfelt  
Whose plausible coincidence of will  
Even with mine own might never operate  
Otherwise than my certainty of self  
Permits unto the will of God-in-me ?  
Were not the soul, that thus can rise beyond  
Dependence and attain indifference toward  
The infinite will (such autovital self),  
Superior to any confidence  
Wherein the right of self-reliance were  
Lost and assurance credulously placed  
Upon the fiat of an emptiness

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Which no heart-introspection verifies ?  
Rather, the true report of skepticism  
Be for a credo ; firm denial of God  
For faith : acceptance of uncertainty  
Be certain, clear, distinct assurance won :  
How nought in the world stands proven as we  
sense it ;  
But all, if any world beyond the soul  
Exist, may be deception ! Then at last,  
However pitiful and valueless,  
Ironical, a mockery might be  
The proven data of a motion-world  
Conceived as heterousian to thought,  
Yet in such world's rejection by our thought  
Lurks nothing that may make the soul ashamed,  
Nothing wherfrom our certainty may shrink  
For fear of lie divine, contingency  
For guarantee ; but all is open then  
To confidence, reliance in a will  
That wipes into a nescience inane  
The fabled world of fiat ! That a world  
(For some world must be to our questioning)  
Based in the inward certainty (for no  
World hath survived from self estranged) may rise

## DESCARTES

Germane unto the mind that makes of it  
Interpretations of the things of sense  
Which are of thought's own substance ; and  
be seen

By warranty of faith immediate  
In world-construction (to our questioning  
A fair response) for soul-experience  
Of soul, in virtue of the will-of-self  
Self-differential ! Then my *Cogito*  
Shall bear a meaning of a world-in-me ;  
Mine *Ergo sum* involve creation (as  
A God) of endless multitudes of souls,  
Past and to-come unto the end of time,  
Holding in each soul, as within my soul,  
By godship, each, all-time's criterion  
All-independent of eternity.  
*Cogito, ergo sum !* — (Gassendi hath  
His answer, and I mine) — The vortices  
Shall stare amazed upon the Vortex-Soul !

## SPINOZA

HOW marvellous that I, the mind minute,  
Of personage obscure and humble place,  
Benedict, outcast (how that Benedict  
Implies the wonder !) at my daily task  
Of grinding glasses unto optic aid,  
Should share in God and, to my least degree,  
In finite represent His attributes  
Infinite, grounds of my modality,  
Extension both and Thought ; in that I taste  
Both bodily and with the spirit-sight  
(As body and thought are one within my soul)  
Somewhat of His intention absolute —  
For order, system, law are God in us —  
Gazing athwart these lowlands toward the sea  
And sensing God the boundless in their breadth.  
Ay, every man and every beast (therein  
Descartes was blind and brutal that he placed  
Dumb brutes beyond the pale of soul !), in sort  
Each herb of the field, if not each smallest grain  
Of the sea's shifting sand, yields sight in least  
Of that which God is. For in fact and thought  
Is He each man, each beast, each herb of the field,

## SPINOZA

And every grain of the sea's shifting sand —  
The sea unseen, whose murmur, like God's voice  
Within the heart, comes on the distant air  
Unto my window as I work and muse  
Of His infinity, the Far yet Here,  
Thought ev'n as Existence. For the great Descartes  
Was fair in this : that certainty of self  
(And with it, as I hold, of every fact  
In anywise resemblant of a self)  
Felt in the postulate immediate  
(As by analogy applied to all)  
Of thought, can rest but in the truth of God  
His being as His knowing. But beyond  
Descartes was this ; the proof that, an God be  
(As God were absolute primal axiom!),  
Must all soe'er in somewise be of Him  
Parcel and aspect, sharing as of God  
In thought and being, spirit-truth or space.  
For otherwise were God's infinitude  
Hamper'd, determined, and confined (so made  
Nought infinite) by merest being of each  
(For, e'en though finite, yet must entity  
Be relatively theirs in virtue of  
Possess'd extension, attribute of being :

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

No mere illusion to our thought that else  
Were but deceived by God whose law is truth !) —  
Were God confined by very being of each  
The least herb of the field, sand of the sea,  
Or ear to hear the murmuring far voice  
From ocean drifting with the westerwind  
Unto my window over the wide lea.  
René was right. But on him must I build  
The explanation of our dualism,  
God's prime assumption of the attributes  
Wherein, as substantives by God create  
Opposed, Descartes divided yet the world  
Nor reunited them, as needs should be,  
(Save partially, if God and mind be one ?)  
In ultimate essence of the Substance-God.  
For God conceived he (as a man might see  
Some ocean over beyond a managed land)  
For stuff-of-thought somewise intractable,  
Incapable of reclamation still ;  
Maugre our dunes or dikes of argument  
Not germane to the fact of fact-in-space  
But sheerly non-extensive ; that there stood,  
Over against the solid land of men,  
Their goings and their comings practicable

## SPINOZA

(Which only as in the brain's pineal gland  
Had touch of God or unity with Him !),  
The theory of God within the mind :  
Final assurance somewise (as the sea  
Might seem to bound and be for firmament  
Around our continent) of me and mine,  
This man and that man and their means and ways ;  
But not, save solely for that postulate  
Of being through thought's certainty of self,  
Accountable for truth's duality  
In either instance. For the mind of God  
(With René, substantive not attribute ;  
Opposed to matter and not reconciled  
By relative ascription), why should it think  
(By indirection through the mind of man  
Dreaming the dreams of space unwarrantable !)  
The thoughts call'd mind of man ; and why should man  
Think thoughts of space-extension, dream of things  
Unwarranted by spacelessness of God,  
And hence, if anywise themselves a truth,  
Of independent fundament ? Whence God  
By postulates Cartesian well might seem  
A somewhat merely over-against all  
We know of land and sea and air alike ;

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And therefore (lo ! a God remote and lorn  
As ocean !) inly over-against us too,  
Whose stuff-of-thought (explain'd as God none less !)  
Is land and sea and air, herb of the field,  
Beast of the pasture, and that distant sound  
Which comes like voice out of the infinite  
In sooth, whilst but some emanation from  
The pulse-beat of the surge upon the sand —  
Nought other : though it stir my senses here  
And with them all my soul (my soul, but sense  
Of world in order of eternity  
And therefore God in sort) to speak of God !  
Thus take I great Descartes. Were he right wholly  
(And then would he be Nature, God not Man !)  
Were God yet very near nonentity ;  
And nought were referable unto Him  
Nor explicable by infinity,  
Where His infinity, so false-conceived  
As mental substance sans space-attribute,  
Were bounded by the substance of our space,  
Our world and everything we think therein  
So far as built upon the facts of sense !  
Nor can Geulincx, with all his fear of God,  
Effect a reconciling, where his God

## SPINOZA

Must operate on substances opposed,  
Mind both and body as occasion calls,  
To harmonize ; though neither is of Him  
For attribute, and therefore both alike  
Determine God as in Jehovah's guise ;  
And Descartes' fault is doubled. Nor can they  
Of Britain, Bacon, Hobbes, or latest Locke,  
By reference of every truth to sense  
And thus at last to motion, more than mean  
That of a God, an One, they know nor care.  
But of the dear dilemma doth a truth  
Evolve, how God, if Godlily He be,  
Must owe both fundamental attributes,  
Not mind alone, far less this world of space  
Solely, but both alike, extension and  
Thought, if inverse of aspect both yet God's,  
Attributes wherein rests modality. —  
That further problem of the attributes,  
Their prime interrelation, how they be  
Wholly obverse and yet of God the same,  
Without relation and yet correlate,  
That problem leave I to futurity  
Building upon me as upon Descartes  
I build. My stint of sight goes not so far,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Though sure unto the limit of my reason :  
Reason, sufficient by my sharing in  
The truth of God, as He is infinite  
And finite I, but otherwise one truth.  
Nay, and that further contrast ultimate  
Of my half-finite, His infinity  
(This difficulty of our modalism)  
Seemeth itself but marvel, not to be  
Wholly explain'd by me the quasi-finite  
Who realize, appropriate in mind  
But may not sanely solve the mystery  
None less for marvel actual assured !  
For in the dual attribution springs  
The form of truth that yields me share in God ;  
And therefore is the marvel possible  
That I the bigots' scapegoat, late thrust out  
From synagogue and service of my race  
And in this humble village set to earn  
A meagre livelihood by craft obscure,  
May ne'ertheless feel of the infinite  
My share for solace and be stuff of God  
Both as I sit and see the widespread leas  
Of this Low Country and, though fleshly-born,  
Am parcel of His plenitude of space,

## SPINOZA

And as the murmur of the distant sea  
So faintly touching on the ear of sense  
Speaks to the spirit and resolves my thought  
To ratiocinate of God the Mind,  
Thought-universal: that my meagre thoughts  
Are also God's: God thereby through me proven,  
In virtue even of my finitude,  
Nowise determined of my finitude,  
But postulating and approving it  
In both those ways diverse which great Descartes  
Fail'd of ascribing equally to Him.  
And thus the ultimate axiom of God,  
The substance self-appearing modalwise  
As self-diverse, gleams through my daily task  
Of grinding glasses unto optic aid  
(Fit symbol of a mission unto men !)  
Daily discern'd, daily to comfort me  
In this affliction, thrust beyond the pale  
Of race and old religion. And I plan,  
As adequately as my share in Him  
May prompt me and permit, to set me forth  
The ethical system of the Modal God,  
The substance and the attributes portray'd,  
The truths of reason and the truths of sense,

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Insight of ordering eternity  
To govern, regulate our daily ways  
Of passion and affection—all portray'd  
By method of the sure geometer  
From postulate and axiom, premised in  
The truth of this reflection: whilst the sea  
Pours to my ear attuned, attentive now  
The distant, small yet full sonority  
Of mightiness at working: that my work,  
Though emanate but from this mind minute,  
May with the breadth and fulness of the sea  
Have power, and speak to many among men  
Of mightiness at working. Great Descartes  
Rifted the world in twain—I, Benedict  
The poor world-outcast, heal the rift—in God.

## KANT

FROM our dogmatic slumbers surely we  
Awake, and critically comprehend  
The compromise between opposing creeds.  
From our dogmatic slumbers we awake !  
God, freedom, immortality abide,  
An heritage of grace inviolable  
In virtue of the comprehension, saved  
Unto our personal practice, though at best  
Lost from phenomenal sufficiency  
Or any knowledge. But the faith remains  
Clear'd of confusion with the things of sense,  
Space-intuition or the synthesis  
*Sprung à posteriori.* Prior to  
All understanding, underlying all  
Of sensuous reason, gleam intuitive  
To pure-imagination (an the term  
Mean thought-beyond-conception ?) postulates  
Proved innerly ideal, quite beyond  
Concatenation with experiable  
Truth-presentation. Undiscursively  
*Sub specie æternitatis* spring  
The truths beyond space, time, or very judgment :

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Self-given, transcendental : God, the soul ;  
And, of the two conjoin'd, freedom of deed  
Within will-conscience categorical.  
Thus much is sure : no mere analysis  
Of inborn intellection e'er might yield  
Experience ; no experience by sense,  
Save apperceptual, might formulate  
Truth-relativity and functioning.  
Nor, if our knowledge be, as thus approved,  
Wholly experiential, earn'd of sense  
For necessary substance apperceived  
Within the formal functions space and time,  
Might duty, conscience, immortality  
Be saved unto the soul, nor God and soul  
Experience themselves, unless at last  
Over beyond experience remain  
The final postulates self-warranted,  
Axiomatic, whereof (noumenal  
To faith if to our very reason blind)  
Are guidance, valuation yielded to  
All acts of man, man moralist alone  
In virtue of a Duty, absolute,  
Unquestionable. We indeed awake  
From our dogmatic slumbers ; and are sure

## KANT

By warrant of the sane evaluation,  
Evaluation applicable alike  
To aught sensational or rational,  
Hypostatized or formal, save alone  
Those postulates exempt, themselves beyond  
Concept of form or substance. Save at least  
For such exemption, seems the last truth known,  
The problem solved. — Might any man do more ?  
And in the conscious-won achievement now  
I, soul-mature, resign the teaching, take  
Leave of my post for leisure whilst I live  
To recapitulate to mine own mind  
What I have learn'd and taught before all men.  
And the truth seems as I above declare,  
Displacing dogmatisms hitherto  
True seemingly and heretofore believed.

Though, were it not but dogmatism disguised  
To rest in any doctrine that would seem  
Final truth-satisfaction ? May not truth  
(Attainable perchance by criticism,  
Yet, as attain'd, formative-critical !)  
Itself be process, truth-belief at best  
In alterance ever (I would fain believe

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

No man in error where belief is frank  
As in this Gottlieb ! I would fain believe  
My wisdom unendanger'd by success  
Of counter-systems !) that the old give place  
To new : as I in leadership must now  
Yield to the young-advancing spirit, he  
Whom I befriended, yet before the world  
Who openly decries my creed, would fain  
Substitute for this credence noumenal  
Some sense of selfness felt intuitively,  
To solve the riddle of antinomies  
As I proposed them, relegating form-  
And-substance (hitherto my fundament  
Of cosmic explanation) to mere phase  
Of self-deliverance, self-utterance  
Of the absolute inherence, egohood ?  
My craft were criticism, judgment o'er  
The crabbed dogmatisms of thought and sense —  
And so far fairly ! Yet are those dogmatisms  
In my critique, as sadly I confess,  
Alike regarded as unreconciled  
For terms of explanation ultimate  
Unless in some third function nowhere found  
Save in a faith, pragmatic postulate

## KANT

Necessitated lest reason and sense  
Alike be vacuous and all truth be lost ;  
Faith call'd in compromise to substitute  
For non-phenomena unknowable,  
For spaceless, timeless soul-nonentity,  
For chaos come again, wanting a form.  
That I 've derived God, immortality,  
The human soul from such sheer *tour de force*  
Of *unctio in extremis* to my creed  
Scarce may discredit this the fresh attempt  
Of him who, postulating inwardness,  
Egohood for the pure *nooumenon*  
(Though how such universal be defined  
Unless as I and thou as each is man,  
I know not nor might readily conceive !),  
Assumes the derivation of a world  
By spontaneity, as it would seem,  
Although by opposition absolute  
From out such selfness. Shall I pale before  
The young-ascending star without at worst  
Some criticism, comprehensively  
Some effort urgent of mine egohood  
(Of Egohood within the will of me  
Even as a god, and yet God by no means !—

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

So Johann Gottlieb teacheth me to mouth)  
Unspent as yet although eyesight be dim  
And hand's strength failing for the record here ?  
Shall I in dogmatism make descent  
Who flourish'd in a dogmatism's fall,  
Or use my last of critical acumen,  
Of estimate and apperception, toward  
Some reconstruction of the falling scheme,  
Some alteration of the creed, to crave  
Attention from the centuries to-come  
Even beyond this Fichte's ? For I feel,  
In my sad sense of failure before him  
Who would reclaim to our experience  
Innerly what my teaching hath but proved  
No presentation — in my failure feel I  
A principle of regenerance, a seed  
Perchance of proof will relegate his own  
(Which seems indeed strangely to lack some real  
Accountability for me and thee  
As we are facts of mine experience !)  
To obsolescence. Centuries, may be,  
Shall heed some fresh tongue that shall plainly speak  
What I 'd adumbrate with my senile sense  
And failing faculties which yet yield not

## KANT

Without revolt to triumph such as his  
Who was my pupil; for the old demurs  
At the new prophet and would none of him,  
Save to refute him out of his own mouth,  
By full agreement fain outstripping him  
To win the laurel in the lists of truth! —  
So be it; for this my criticism now  
Of mine own creed and system, radical  
And fundamental in simplicity:  
The egohood of Fichte (which would seem  
Wanting in characteristic?), with mine own  
Appreciant return upon the truth  
Within the truth and constituting it;  
Solving perchance the problem of a God-world  
Noumenal, self-sustaining as I feel it  
In process of world-truth, yet none the less  
Experiable and phenomenal,  
Formal and characteristic even in each  
As each, yet infinite in every soul.  
For is not this my soul some infinite  
(Not as a world-force surely — but as myself!)  
Grasping the truth of Gottlieb, as before  
The truths of predecessors, by return  
Upon itself ever elaborating

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Unlimited criteria within  
(But not beyond ; for nought might be beyond !)  
The postulated process ? Therefore, on  
To criticism unused, whose verity  
Even as some function of my being proves  
Capacity within my creed to close  
With views unwonted, satisfactory  
Unto an intellect that knows itself  
In the very process-critical, itself  
Highest example of the problem now  
To solve by power of the problem's self.

For, on this hint of Fichte, I absolve  
Intellect from those limitations (deem'd  
Proven as limitations) space and time —  
Its own formality. And now declare  
Essential formalism (such even as space  
And time the universals) for no proof  
Of limitation nor of truth beyond  
Our powers of apprehension rationally,  
Which by their own exhaustion but exhaust  
Truth proven concluded of their formalism  
And formalist essentially as them.  
Though all be given in phenomena

## KANT

As an experience interminable,  
Yet just such mutualism essential yields  
Key to the secret of experience,  
Yields resolution to the antinomy  
Of such a criticism as mine old creed  
Pronouncing its own impotence of proof !  
For, lo ! howe'er our sense be constituted  
Of universe external, if we be  
(As thou or I in estimating truth)  
Ourselves the judge of such experience,  
Experiencing but in virtue of  
This faculty of judgment critical  
(As mine old creed fairly establishes),  
Then is our truth a figment in itself  
(Not representative but original,  
Not tentatively but definitive  
Unto the soul elaborating it !)  
Of its own mastery creative, true  
As by processiveness recompliant  
Of the creator-judgment, thine or mine,  
Inly assumptive ; and (unless we be  
Utterly all-illusive !) infinite  
Because interminably determinative  
• Of its intrinsic mutuality

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of item unto item constituting  
My personality or thine alike  
Creative of the world-experience  
Nowise identical, yet identically  
Appreciant, apperceptive, absolute  
For all world's sensuous relativity  
And imposition of the counter-self —  
Posited counter, scarce by force imposed  
Of general conatus not one's own  
But, by the identical totality  
Of selfness equally inherent to  
Mine object-inverse as mine egohood.  
And to such self-world scheme were space the  
form  
Of counter-self supposed indifferent  
To alteration ; and the form of change  
Time, as my consciousness alone hath motion  
Cumulant, irretactable, and hence  
Essentially processive (whether through  
Objective-world or subject), over space  
An alterant eternity in each  
Moment of implication endlessly.  
Where were the need, to such evaluing,  
Of any cosmic essence putatively

## KANT

(That bugbear thing-itself beyond all ken !)  
A non-objective independently  
Of formalism in this my space and time ?  
Where were the need of any egohood  
(Call it a soul, God, immortality :  
My theory or Fichte's, who may care ?)  
All undiscursive of an universe ?  
What were the want of some imperative  
Of conscience nowise presentational,  
Bearing no reference to a world of selves  
Of equal counter-obligation ? How  
Conceive some ultimate antinomy  
Of finite-infinite, when, to this new  
Presupposition of totality  
At self-determination, finitude  
Or absolute infinity alike  
Were utterly fallacious ; and the truth,  
The essence-structure of the system's self,  
Were some infinitizing of each fact  
By comprehension of the whole in each,  
Were some determinism finite-wise,  
But none less inferential endlessly  
Of the universal, of the unification  
Of rational appreciation ? Such

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

A faculty of judgment doubtless may  
Excuse its operation from the law  
Of abstract concept categorical  
Or crass modalities of logic-scheme ;  
Where every judgment is alike of form  
Inceptual, mutualizing (by no mean  
Of class-subsumption, no identifying  
Of entities distinct but misdefined  
By the inclusion indiscriminant),  
Mutualizing items whose whole worth  
(Whose worth as whole and finally defined)  
Lies in their implication each of each  
Obversely, by polarity of like  
To unlike (by appropriance subjectwise  
In contrast to the world-rejectiveness  
Of object), reconciled but ne'er confused  
In the judgment-deed, the effective alterance  
Of self through world, the conscious ethicism  
Positing both which otherwise were nought.  
Such an inherence of the world in self,  
Self in the world establishing its truth  
By absolute experience, were perforce  
A moralism, an insight of the deed  
Determinant interminably through

## KANT

All deeds else of a world's infinity,  
And hence a conscience and a duty, far  
Beyond all law-imposed imperative,  
Establishing for law what well may seem  
Rule universal—'Act so that thy deed  
'Should be the deed of all.' For thus thy deed  
(By my fresh insight of the world-permeation)  
Determines universally through all  
A novel form and substance unto truth,  
Each deed itself creative of a truth  
Valid by absolute conformity  
Unto the nature of the cosmic scheme,  
A scheme created by the comprehension,  
The evaluation ultimate express'd  
In each world-conscienced act-experience  
Of teleology interminable  
(For all the empiricism of our sense)  
Through space-in-time, of every hour and place  
Wherein we move and have our being. For thus  
Are space and time no mere restrictive forms  
In limitation of the thing-itself,  
But, space for world, time for the subject-soul,  
Our essence-being and the truth of things  
Noumenal as perceptual, sensuous

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY .

As intellectual ; and nought were beside  
Of any meaning to an universe  
Of individuation, personal  
As this of thine and mine ! — There, Fichte, thou !  
Condemn me out of mine own mouth, if thou  
Wouldst to the centuries be more than I !

But, ah ! what standard anywhere of truth  
Remains, if out of every mouth may mouth  
Condemn the truth, as I this Fichte's, he  
Mine, as myself erstwhile have disapproved  
The dogmatisms heretofore believed ?  
Where were the settlement of truth-dispute  
Fit for the fond old-age of such as me,  
To comfort and console for many a doubt  
With sense of some real goal to all our search  
And standard ultimate for test and proof ?  
If to the centuries thou wouldst be more  
Than I, or I than thou, must there be more  
For truth-criterion than this strange-made Self  
(Whate'er its restless heart-conatus toward  
Unceasing criticism cumulative ! )  
Which thou hast conjured and my thought hath  
won

## KANT

Unto pale-gibbering ghostliness, myself  
As that false seer whose disembodied earth  
Shimmer'd arcanawise within his dreams !  
Ah, Gottlieb ! what hast thou not wrought of harm  
To sane and serious thinking ; what have I  
Not in this hour brought home to mine own creed  
Of accusation in enormity ?  
Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, none did this ;  
Locke, Berkeley, nay — save as a Hume was in them :  
And we, as now ! But we are many Humes,  
Powerful as our disproofs are powerful  
Beyond the shallower skepticism to slay,  
Slay and leave nought but orphanage to earth !  
Cringe we not both convicted, who forsook  
The safe assumption of a Deity  
Himself accountable not unto us  
Even for the mystery, the antinomy  
Of me or thee striving to comprehend  
An universe ? Struck not my first fond blow  
The shackles from our dogmatisms, to lead  
Inevitably to the loss at last  
Of all God guaranteed ? My criticism,  
My feeling for the soul's formality  
And earth's phenomenality, alas !

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Lifted they not the veil, that thou and I  
Have enter'd into the temple and are there  
Godless, deserted, desolate of hope,  
The great destroyers of the Word-Reveal'd,  
Thought-stultified and soul-ashamed ? What faith  
Without pretence of logic can abide  
The very skepticism that left it there  
A mockery unto mine own insight  
When stirr'd to quick acumen by thy crude  
Snatch at the thunder, by thy gross conceit  
Of innermost omniscience ? Mine old-age  
Hath left earth somewhat desolate ; thy youth  
Hath sow'd but dragon-teeth of discontent  
At hard-won orphanage ! For surely we  
From our safe dogmatisms are wide-awaked :  
And the new chaos welters, who knows where ?

## MRS. BROWNING

NO, not one word of death ! Though here I die,  
These songs I leave thee. And they are my life ! —

Love, who hast given me hope and health and voice,  
Making me poet in mine own despite !  
Lurk'd there a song of my lips till thy love bid me  
Onward and up to lift my heart to thine —  
There that thou stoodest sole yet and sublimely  
Where no soul's song save mine may dwell with  
thee ?

Surely a world of song is wholly thine :  
Thine isolate sublimity, no lack  
Of a universe to love and call thine own.  
Yet, thou wast wont to stoop, to lift it, so !  
Till, suddenly, one lift more, and 't is I  
Startling my spirit to its fresh-found depths  
With peal and pæan who can stand with thee !  
'T is the right woman's-work. Where thou art —  
well,  
Not seraph-spotless as in vaster theme  
(Though how this love of mine at least did mend  
Thy music to that song of Any Spouse

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Whose spotlessness belies me where I lie !),  
Where thou wert passionate yet conscienced still  
Of man and woman as a man must be—  
There swells the wife-heart ; and the Word is sung !  
Shall I accomplish thus Aurora's life  
In mine own person, complementing man  
With woman's utter passion-purity ?  
What though Aurora fail as poet-piece ?  
It manifests a mission — made complete  
In its own failure by these Sonnet-things.  
These, then, my song ; my voice wrung-out by thee,  
For thee and through thee unto all mankind —  
The love that springs forth naked, unashamed !  
  
Love, how these songs live at the heart of thee !

## CARLYLE

I GRIEVE for old bereavement ; long alone  
I seek to salve my sore with some new sight,  
Mine own gone stale ; I seek to see the world  
With eyes of others : as in all those years  
Of her companionship I fail'd to find  
Hers or to dwell at large within that soul.  
Thus much hath been of loss irrevocable,  
Wholly inexorable, fix'd withal —  
Thus much of her. Let me not quit the world  
Without some insight of the younger eyes  
To bear upon my grief ; I yet preserving  
What wisdom hath been to me beyond theirs :  
Not losing God, perhaps gaining the world  
In some way yet unguess'd. Let me allow  
This loneliest unrest to expatriate  
Out of the fulness of some central truth  
Ev'n to truth's utmost confines — how, I care not ;  
But yield my thought to the flux, all unafraid. —

In darkness or in wisdom struggling, each,  
Centre and focus of immensity,  
The confluence each of two eternities :

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Each soul some sign of the infinite, of God !  
Thus have I spoken ; and shall stand by that ;  
Against their cant of atheism, secure :  
The fulness of the central truth withal !  
And what though this be pantheism : if true ?  
What though I risk mine individual self  
(And with that self all hope of after-death !) —  
As their taunt goes — if God alone in truth  
Be the truth, and there be no self beside ?  
And more : how lose a self if in some sense  
(No matter how, so long as truth it be)  
That self be infinite and find in God  
A loftier truth that yet is self the same ?  
I have decried this truth when logic-woven  
Of empty metaphysic subtlety  
Without firm faith-foundation ; I have mock'd  
The misty opium-dreamer ; scoff'd at him  
My first disciple from beyond the sea —  
While ever haughtily refusing help  
Proffer'd of physic-fact's stolidity.  
But now am come, fronting the physic-fact,  
Fearless to grapple with it, reconstruct  
That slough utilitarian to truth,  
If may be, builded of mine Emerson

## CARLYLE

His unforgotten Godhood of the soul !  
I have examined soul and find it so ;  
Seem to myself assured of self-in-God.  
A thought to stand-by, utterly sincere.

But why asseverate, asseverate,  
If nought be to gainsay within the soul ?  
If all the conscious cant, hypocrisy  
Be wholly theirs, be none at all of mine,  
Why vehement, why objurgatory so  
Through all these years of mine accomplishment,  
With irritation of internal fret  
And mental pain, as though some lurking rift  
'Twixt fact and faith tortured the frenzied brain ?  
Why is it that the question hath curr'd  
To the same condemnation hour by hour —  
Ever the same — if there be not a doubt;  
If detail of the faith (ay, whether worth  
Faith, fit to be believed !) never demands  
A re-adjudication, if to stay  
Still genuinely, vitally sincere ?  
The detail of my faith hath varied much —  
Half Calvin I, half Fichte ! — still sincere ?  
Am I alone 'infallible ' of men

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(Incapable; that, of falsity to self),  
Whilst doom'd within me to deny as 't were  
Myself, denying what I yet feel fact-like :  
Ignoring this their 'evidence of fact'  
Which so gets hold of me, for all my cry ;  
Which holding me compels me that I cry ?  
How may there be that everlasting Yea  
I prate of, an there be no Nay as real  
As in mine adolescence I too knew ?  
Were not my Yea of the soul just Fichte's Self,  
My Calvinism alway so bemock'd,  
Save something of denial by a world  
Be the world and give God a meaning still ?  
What if the evidence of fact hath truth  
And earth, as earth, be godless as they claim it ?  
Shall that destroy me ? Shall idealism  
Die vehement deplored phantoms lost ?  
Stay, put this case, that earth lies as they say  
Barren, and God a gas, and heaven a void,  
And soul some tubercle ! Shall I have fear  
That God and soul cannot by ev'n these false-truths  
Triumph and turn them but to truth the more ?  
'T were worst hypocrisy, self-sham and cant  
Longer to laugh their evidence to scorn

## CARLYLE

As hitherto. At least their full belief  
(Mistaken, certainly ?) is yet some fact  
For me to face. A world, of many men  
Half-one with God, believes there is no God :  
Within God's scheme there proves a place for such.  
Within my rede (as I am phase of God)  
Must prove the same place, proved as it shall please  
God to give value. — May earth be as godless ;  
And God yet of me and my faith be His ?  
A search for truth then, utterly sincere ! —

And why so long postponed I to old-age  
This search for truth, if utterly truth-single  
At soul in my life's labor as I deem'd  
Of prophet, truth-seeker ? May it not be  
Perchance some love toward what most apeth truth  
(But is not save the self be very God  
And very worldless as by Berkeley's scheme),  
Zeal for conviction, worst unconscious-cant,  
Sincere-hypocrisy (subtlest demerit  
Of Satan's panoply !) that hath subdued me ?  
I doubt, then, that I truly have loved truth  
Despite much protestation. I have loved  
Sincerity, pre-requisite soul of truth

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

But not truth's body, forgetful that men's faith  
Is measured also by the emblem of it  
(The Not-Self of that Fichte, and the 'form  
'Of pure perception' in the slang of Kant,  
Determinate-momenta of that Hegel,  
As the babble goes!) — sole warrant of the mind  
Contra mistake, crass insufficiency,  
Error against the laws of world-in-God.  
Granted God doth allow of varying merit,  
The less or more of truthful worth attain'd,  
The achievement characteristic and unique,  
The stint of sight — each heart may be sincere  
In force of sheer belief and yet unworthy.  
(How self may be so — that is for research  
Of some far future soul, the final problem  
Of all soul's exercise in search of truth —  
The logic-law of error — I may not seek it !)  
What, thus, were the honest fool but fool-sincere,  
A fact of nature scantily valuable  
In furtherance of truth? And I have praised him  
Through mine intemperance of outcry 'gainst  
Mere sham. I doubt me if a man may well  
(Even myself despite this hour's first fear !)  
Unto himself (the last appeal?) be sham;

## CARLYLE

But deem him mainly earnestness at heart  
In genuine effort to delude the world  
At worst, at best not to delude himself ;  
Even I at worst, ah, to myself sincere !  
I had been thus far sham-like, fool-sincere,  
Incapable of answering with truth  
Unto their false-truth wherewith they deny  
God, immortality, that I approved  
Nigh any ignorance if but confident  
(Mine own admitted ignorance this day  
Of immortality, the lesson of it  
Illustrative as of some Fichtean scheme,  
Some Hegel's subtlety beyond mere dreams  
Of Emerson, of Coleridge and his crew,  
Found in the facts these modern men mistake —  
These Darwins, Huxleys, Spencers, and the rest —  
For counterproof, and I till now ignored !),  
Nigh any brutal, raw effrontery —  
Of Friedrich, almost of Danton, Marat —  
Of mind or manners if with courage of  
Its brutishness ; and could not by my test  
Of practical conquest over force opposed  
(The right of might, due to might's truculence :  
The might of right not being competitive !)

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Have logically long discountenanced  
The physic-cohort. (It was but my Ruskin  
That warranted the counterclaim of ' power  
• By virtue of more complex understanding '  
And spiritual conclusion.) I felt free  
With arrogance of Calvinistic zeal,  
While yet confessing doctrines of God's ways  
With men which made men each some Absolute,  
To spurn contemptuous a fund of fact  
Rich to interpret continuity  
Within each individual self as source  
Of both eternities, rich to prove soul  
By metabolic impetus of will  
Ever evolving, rich for detail'd proof  
Of the ways of God-in-man which are the Hero  
And are my heart's religion. I thus forgetful  
How truth is half a doubt, half a dismay  
At that which truth's new being oversets  
(The God *ex machina* of Calvin in me !),  
The truth and thing outworn : because the o'er-  
setting  
Destroys still truth and is that brutal fact  
Which very truth is not. Whence must a love  
For truth be sadness half, half-insincere

## CARLYLE

And saved thereby from being tyranny !  
God is not 'in His heaven' (yon Browning sings it  
For all his tragic musings !) save the soul  
Of man, regretful of Elysium lost,  
Be heaven — and how be heaven save as this earth  
Is freedom and omniscience, absolute power  
Unto each man whose insight of men all  
Yieldeth accommodation, compromise  
In practice, as by infinite interplay  
Of conscience — Fichte given body and hands  
By this despised (and rightly despicable  
In its own sordid dust-analysis)  
Material hypothesis — reborn  
As inward force, infinity of power  
In self-conatus — dream'd by mere Lamarck !  
Whence must belief in immortality  
By soul's new proof derived out of the earth  
(Earth's continuity of constant change  
Precluding alteration beyond felt  
Identity of self within self's span)  
Be half a sadness for the faith outworn  
Of personal persistence after death —  
This personal infinity, once proven,  
Of each least conscious spirit in so far

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

As conscientious of the facts of soul  
About him — coextensive with his truth —  
Debarring any aftermath of death ;  
And leaving sad, regretful this belief  
In earth-borne godhood for the loss at best  
Of heaven-and-hell and God's machinery  
Of retribution or unending bliss.  
The retribution, bliss without an end,  
Are heroism as I feel it in me,  
The comprehensive rule of faith in self  
Avowing rights of self within all else  
As source of mutual duties. Truth is such.

I clearly have inveigh'd (beyond best wont  
Of world's great truth-seekers) against untruth,  
And have been thus untrue unto myself  
In the sole way man may be thus untrue :  
Incapable of assimilating much  
Which dreary atheism (saved, re-born  
In the Teuton's mystery) now turns to mean.  
Could I but greatly retransform in me  
The false which yet in other minds or times  
Is as the truth (these doctrines, let us say,  
Of transmutation, teaching the loftier scheme

## CARLYLE

Of continuity as self-defining  
The conscious soul coterminous with all,  
Hence infinite !) I less had been sincere-like,  
May be, (well might I wax wiser by that !)  
But truthful more unto the universe  
Of men within me each of whom speaks truth  
And acts it as is in him : truthful most  
Unto divinity that each man is—  
Each comprehensive of the selves of all.  
Thus had I truest been historian,  
As poet, not fantastic chronicler,  
By artistry (as one may some day tell  
My history !), each puppet speaking forth  
Reflective estimate of his own acts  
In terms of my best insight of acts all,  
Rather than act (as writ) a narrative  
Held up to censure by my private creed —  
He unenlighten'd in his own estate.  
(I ponder that and find that it is so.)  
Then had I seen that action least is finite,  
Most focus of the eternal by most conscience,  
Most gradual wisdom, than by that brute-born  
haste  
Of swift decision bred of ignorance

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

As was the crass way of the cross'd of old,  
As is the way now of the tyrannous,  
The self-assertive, not the self-contain'd !  
Then had I offer'd less a wail of protest,  
More the benign construction Goethe knew  
As god unto his spiritual realm ;  
More worshipping the truth intrinsically  
(And therefore worshipful as no mere hero),  
However overthrown and crush'd by force  
Of crude sincerity ; and therefore more  
As great men are, fostering not deriding  
The weaker cause : myself a power among them,  
Chief optimist, upbuilder, constituter  
In spite of great, wise grief over things lost  
Which each fresh proof destroys. I have seen  
    truth  
Destroy'd and new truth ever self-destroy'd ;  
Have felt and made men feel the tragedy ;  
But ever as by that prevalence of might  
Irrational, for right no substitute  
Save by some stultification, by some juggle  
Of phrase to take the fact for proof of law  
(Withal mistaking the real moral-fact) ;  
Thus ever as dull protester (irony,

## CARLYLE

The tongue of impotent discontent !) perceiving  
Not that best protest comes by best constructing  
Advanceward of the times, not turning back.  
It may be that the meaning of the times  
Brings a belief in just this way achieved now  
(Despite the lawless Law of Darwin's creed)  
Of individual initiative  
(Not tyrannous dominance by force sincere ;  
Not purpose of some mob beyond the man !)  
Proven by comprehension, soul-conclusion  
Ensuant on the shown necessity  
Of each in every mutual influence.  
It may be that the petty point-by-point  
Of all their science (those benumbing norms —  
False metaphor for Mill's, for Spencer's dreams .  
Of metaphysic systems self-disguised  
And therefore feebler, foolisher than most —  
Belittling man's best effort, every sweep  
And lift of an heart their theory denies)  
Opens, as now I find, a splendor-proof  
Of hyper-heroism, divinity,  
In this world-constitution, within each  
Its definition, miscall'd consequence.  
I 'll not inveigh against pettiest proofs

## POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(I catch me in contempt nevertheless,  
Maugre this hour's avow'd catholicism !)  
Of utilization in the general scheme  
(I leave those sand-wastes to the Bentham-brood);  
But show the standard of utility  
(Synthetic source of value by insight  
Through sympathy, not competition with  
Desires and satisfactions of all men)  
Mainly this personal perception of  
Evaluation within every man —  
Not within all alike, but within each  
In sort by terms yet individualwise  
Distinctive, not less infinite thereby,  
Because, respective in their private kind  
And grade, conclusive. Something of this at heart  
I spake of several in whose half-success  
I found some warrant of divinity  
(Mahomet, Dante, Luther, and of him  
Misjudged by name of Cromwell) — them I loved  
And felt at one, contributors to use  
Upbuilt within my soul as theirs in furth'rance  
Of 'God's will' : rather, of that sympathy  
Which clothes increasingly our passion-frame  
With moderation as a garment, pity

## CARLYLE

And acquiescence unto other wills,  
By knowledge of their faith soul-absolute  
Conforming self unto its world of selves ;  
Each in its lonely sort a world by insight !

Then to the recognition, reconstruction ;  
To find it very helpful at the last  
Unto the old man ruthlessly bereaved :  
Their crazed material hypothesis —  
Toward God-in-the-world (not merely by example  
Through history, but) by continuity,  
By self-necessitation of world-knowledge  
Truth-cumulative in the temporal stream  
Enveloping, involving ‘to the end’ :  
By worldhood-needed such a knowledge shown  
Focus of both eternities ; some sign  
Of life immortal in and of itself  
As each is self — though all the world shall pass.

Ah me ! but the bereavement : I alone !













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